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VOICES FROM THE VOID

Six Years' Experience in Automatic Communications

BY

HESTER TRAVERS SMITH

With an Introduction by

Professor SIR W. F. BARRETT, F.R.S.

The author of this book, Mrs. Hester Travers Smith, is the eldest daughter of the late Professor Edward Dowden, and has for many years been a close personal friend of one of the most distinguished scientific investigators of psychic matters. Sir William F. Barrett, in his introduction, says the following regarding the work of the author:

> "We have here the personal experiences of a gifted psychic or automatist. Mrs. Travers Smith has given me the opportunity of being present at sittings since the development of her psychic power. I can, therefore, testify to the conscientious care, the patience, and the wisdom which she has shown throughout the experiments she has conducted, her whole aim being to enlarge our knowledge in this difficult but important field of enquiry."

It will be of interest to intending readers of this important book to know that some of the most careful, conservative and responsible of American investigators have read this book and urged its publication.

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VOICES FROM THE VOID

Univ. of California

VOICES FROM THE VOID

SIX YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN AUTOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS

BY

HESTER TRAVERS SMITH

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

PROFESSOR SIR W. F. BARRETT, F.R.S.

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

681 FIFTH AVENUE

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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In Memoriam
Clarence Jewellyn.

Printed in the United States of America

FOREWORD

IN introducing this book to the public, I should like to say that my deepest thanks are due to Sir William Barrett, who has helped and encouraged me in every possible way, and to whom I largely owe my interest in Psychical Research.

I also thank the sitters at my circle, who have always been most patient, friendly, and helpful; what I have written is quite as much a record of their work as my own.

I am grateful to the Rev. Savell Hicks and Mr. Lennox Robinson, both of whom helped me by valuable suggestions.

And, lastly, I dedicate "Voices from the Void" to my friend and fellow-worker

"DOROTHY."

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INTRODUCTION

By Professor Sir W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.

THE widespread and growing interest in psychical research has led to the publication in recent years of many books on this subject and on the problem of survival after bodily death. Many of these books are of no real value, owing to the uncritical habit of mind of the writers. The present little book is of a very different order, and it is therefore with much pleasure I heartily commend it to the reader. We have here the personal experiences of a gifted psychic or automatist, who is an educated lady, the eldest daughter of that distinguished man, the late Professor Edward Dowden.

Mrs. Travers Smith has for many years been a friend of mine, and has given me the opportunity of being present at numerous sittings since the development of her psychic power. I can therefore testify to the conscientious care, the patience, and the wisdom which she has shown throughout the long and tedious experiments she has conducted, her only aim being to enlarge our knowledge in this difficult but important field of inquiry. As the reader will notice, Mrs. Travers Smith is not a credulous or hasty investigator; on the contrary, the trend of her mind is healthily skeptical, and hence the opinions at which she has arrived cannot be dismissed as the product of morbid curiosity or the mere will to believe.

The experimental study of automatism which this book presents will therefore, I am convinced, be of great interest and value to the student of abnormal psychology. As the author states, at the outset of her investigations she held the view that the phenomena ob-

tained were merely due to the emergence of that part of the personality of the sitters below the *limen* or threshold of consciousness. Our conscious waking self speaks through the voluntary action of our muscles, whereas our subconscious or subliminal self reveals itself through the involuntary or automatic action of our muscles. Hence in automatic writing, or spelling messages through the so-called "ouija board," the simplest explanation is that which Mrs. Travers Smith at first adopted, that automatism was merely a method of *studying ourselves:* a method by which the hidden part of our personality came to the surface, so that incidents we had forgotten, or impressions made upon us which were too feeble to excite consciousness, were unexpectedly revealed.

Doubtless this explanation covers much of the ground, but the careful investigator soon finds it is inadequate, and it becomes necessary to add to it telepathy from other living minds,

and also to assume the existence of higher faculties in the subliminal than we are aware of in our ordinary conscious personality. As Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, one of the most critical and able students of the whole subject, has remarked, "This extension of human faculty in the subliminal self shows that there is more of us than we are normally aware of, and suggests that the limitations imposed by our bodies are temporary limitations." The experiments recorded in this volume certainly reveal supernormal faculties, such as clairvoyance of seeing without eyes—i.e., the psychical perception of objects, as, for example, when the disarranged letters of the alphabet were correctly indicated although the sitters were effectively blindfolded. Furthermore, we are driven to the conclusion that occasionally telepathy from some unseen intelligence—which purports to be a deceased person—is operative, and directs the messages received. These conclusions, which have been

reached by many competent investigators, have been independently arrived at by the author of this book from her own experiences.

But the most interesting part of the experiments recorded by Mrs. Travers Smith is the evidence they afford of the origin and nature of what are termed the "controls" operating upon the automatist at different sittings. The word *control* is usually applied to the intelligence which acts directly upon the automatist, and which is often employed as the amanuensis or interpreter of the so-called *communicator* from the Unseen. Mrs. Sidgwick, in her critical monograph on the psychology of Mrs. Piper's trance phenomena, considered the controls of Mrs. Piper were nothing more than a real or imaginary dissociation of the personality of the medium during the trance state. There is much to support this view, though it was abandoned by Dr. Hodgson in the later stages of his prolonged study of Mrs. Piper, in favor of the spiritistic hypothesis. Hence

the value of Mrs. Travers Smith's study of these controls as affording fresh evidence of their origin. As will be seen, they present to us a collection of what appear to be wholly different personalities, which retain their distinctive character throughout. If I may express an opinion on the matter, it seems to me more difficult to suppose these coherent, consistent, and varied controls are merely phases of the personality of Mrs. Travers Smith or some other automatist, than to accept the conclusion to which Dr. Hodgson was eventually driven.

In spite of the unquestionable personation of deceased individuals which is a familiar experience among spiritualists, so cautious and critical an investigator as Mrs. Henry Sidgwick admits that through Mrs. Piper and other trustworthy automatists "'veridical' (truth-telling) communications are received, some of which there is good reason to believe come from the dead." If this be admitted, the origin of the control as well as of the communicator

becomes a question of evidence, and of the ultimate nature of our personality or soul.

On this subject Dr. W. McDougall, F.R.S., in his masterly work *Body and Mind,** gives us, if I may say so without impertinence, a most luminous and trustworthy view. We must admit, as Dr. McDougall points out, "that the soul is in some sense a unitary being or entity, distinct from all others." The "unity of consciousness" expresses our physical individuality, and our self-conciousness is only known to us "as individual coherent streams of personal consciousness," a fact which is unintelligible unless we postulate some other ground for it than that of the bodily organization, or suppose that the soul of man is made up of the souls of lesser organisms. But this unity of consciousness, Dr. McDougall points out, "does not rule out the possibility that more than one psychic being may be associated with one bodily organism. It may be that the soul that

* *Body and Mind*, by Dr. W. McDougall, F.R.S., p. 366.

thinks in each of us is but the chief of a hierarchy of similar beings, and that this one alone is able to actualize in any full measure its capacities for conscious activity." Dr. McDougall then goes on to say that "One may see in this possibility the explanation of those strange and bizzare phenomena which have been so zealously studied in recent years under the head of secondary or dual personality."

That well-known case of secondary personality, Sally Beauchamp, Dr. McDougall regards, not as a mere division of the normal personality, but considers that the co-consciousness shown in this case was possibly a distinct psychic being controlling the body of Miss Beauchamp. The more recent case of Doris Fischer supports this view—that occasionally the human body may be controlled by different psychic entities or souls. To attribute these and other cases of multiple personality, and cases apparently of obsession, to the subliminal self of the individual is using that

hypothesis, I venture to say, as a mere cloak for our ignorance.

Returning to the different controls described by Mrs. Travers Smith, I am strongly disposed to consider many of them as distinct psychic entities, and not in all cases mere phases of the personality of the automatist. Doubtless, in some cases the "controls" are merely the ephemeral dream creations of the automatist, and have therefore only a fleeting, and apparent, personality of their own; but in other cases they appear to be distinct souls, and may once have lived in another body on earth, or they may be the products of the evolution of life in the unseen universe, temporarily possessing the brain of the automatist.

However, these are mere speculations, and we must await more evidence before we can arrive at any definite conclusion, beyond the need of extreme caution in taking these "personations" at their face value. The general reader will turn with greater interest to the

evidence which Mrs. Travers Smith's experiments give of the proof of survival after bodily death. It is only necessary to point out that it is imperative, especially in psychical research, to distinguish between the facts narrated and the *inferences* we may draw from these facts. There does undoubtedly appear to be good ground for drawing the inference that some of the evidence here given strongly supports the belief in survival. In this awful and devastating war such evidence comes "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

"My son, the world is dark with grief and graves,
So dark that men cry out against the heavens.
Who knows but that the darkness is in man?
The doors of Night may be the gates of Life."

VOICES FROM THE VOID

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VOICES FROM THE VOID

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

SO many valuable books have been offered of late to the public on the subject of psychic phenomena that I feel some apology should be made by a totally unscientific person like myself for adding to their number. I have not even the excuse that I have anything exciting or sensational to tell; I have never attended a séance for materialization; I have never seen a ghost. Nearly all my experiences have come to me through automatism, and, such as they are, I venture to bring them into the light on

the chance that they may be interesting to the student of these matters; I can vouch for the fact that what I have to tell is the result of patient research, at private sittings, chiefly in my own house, and with the help of various friends, who were as anxious as I to add something, however small, to the vast mass of evidence which has been accumulated on the subject of survival after death.

I have great faith in practical experiment—in fact, I feel sure that those who have actually taken part in séances or sittings get a view of psychic phenomena impossible to persons whose investigations have been merely theoretical. Both points of view are of great value; in many ways the observer is better fitted to weigh the evidence produced by the practical worker than is the worker, for the sense of another personality controlling the automatist is apt to warp the judgment of the sitter. Many things are clear and evidential to the practical experimenter which appear

vague to the theoretical student. My reason for laying the results of my sittings before the public is that they are genuine as far as they go; they represent the work of a small circle of people, all of whom desired to get nearer to the truth, and approached the subject of psychical phenomena in a spirit unbiased as to the source from which such phenomena arise. What we accomplished may seem small, but it must be borne in mind by the reader that no help from any professional medium was given in any of the sittings for automatism quoted by me.

Those who are willing to devote some of their time to the study of what is commonly called "spiritualism" should bear in mind that results are slow, uncertain, and cannot be forced. Indeed, one asks oneself whether time is well spent seeking for the few grains of gold one finds in the huge dust-heaps of disappointment and dullness. The value of these golden grains seems immense when one has wandered

about in a Hades of dim trivialities and even absurdities, spending evening after evening receiving messages from known, or unknown, persons of a kind which would not do credit to a very mediocre letter-writer. Yet these communications purport to be what the unknown control has an ardent desire to get through from the world of mystery to those still alive! Then, quite unexpectedly, a few minutes may atone for the hours of boredom! Many times I have felt inclined to give up this apparently hopeless pursuit, elusive and baffling as it is. I have even persuaded myself that I might venture to come to a definite conclusion on the subject, that each experiment made it more obvious that automatism, at any rate, is the sitter's subliminal self—neither more nor less. This theory simplifies the whole problem; it sets aside the most disturbing matter connected with things psychic, the possibility of an external influence, and one can start from a firmer basis—i.e., that we are studying *ourselves* under ab-

normal conditions, and not holding converse with the spirits of other human beings, alive or dead.

I must confess, however, that having worked more or less steadily at automatism for six or seven years, having started with no theory on the subject, and having been persuaded by turns that I have found this or that explanation of the phenomena which came under my notice—I must confess, I repeat, that for some time past I have been quite clear and decided on one point—in feeling that the subliminal self accounts for much and many things, but not for everything. I am convinced, in fact, that external influences of some nature work through us, using our senses, eyes, ears, brains, etc., their messages, however, being highly colored by the personalities of their mediums. I feel sure that hardly any of the communications I have had are *entirely* due to subconsciousness. What the nature of these external influences may be is another and a most

interesting question, and one still more difficult to answer. I cannot say I have found any satisfactory reply to it so far. I am inclined to think that the communications which reach us come from different sources. In a few cases I have felt almost certain that I had spoken to those I knew who had passed over; they appeared to preserve their earth-memory, and continued to interest themselves in the mundane affairs of those they loved.

I now pass on to the kind of experiment in which I personally have had long and interesting experiences. This subject will occupy much of my little book, so in this chapter I only explain, for the benefit of my less experienced readers, the different methods of communication so far as I know them.

First comes the game called "planchette," the apparatus for which can be purchased in any children's toy-shop in the "games" department. I need hardly describe planchette to any person who troubles to read a book on

psychical research. I only say here that planchette is the clumsiest, most primitive, and least satisfactory "autoscope" possible, and I should recommend anyone who desires to experiment in this field of research to avoid this particular method.

Next comes automatic writing and drawing. This mode of communication has produced most interesting results without doubt, but there are objections to it. A pencil is held generally between the first and third fingers of the hand of the medium; it touches the paper, and as a rule, after some preliminary flourishes and twirls, the pencil begins to write coherent words and messages. These messages vary according to the communicator, and the handwriting changes as different personalities appear. Sometimes the writing is that of a child, then of an old person, etc. One of my objections is that the script is generally difficult to decipher, as (in the nature of things) the pencil cannot be lifted as in ordinary handwrit-

ing, and the MS. is full of scrawls and hard to read. This is not my only objection to automatic writing, which, for some unknown reason, leads in certain cases to continual pain in the arm, an irresistible desire to write, nervous upset, and consequent physical prostration. However, without doubt most interesting and evidential results have been obtained by automatic writing, and my objections to this method do not hold good in all cases.

As to automatic drawing, this phenomenon seems very wonderful in the case of persons possessing no normal faculty as artists. I have seen automatic drawings executed by persons, who in their normal state, were without either artistic taste or training, which would do credit to an art student of many years' standing.

The third method of obtaining automatic messages is the one I can speak of most confidently, as almost all my work has been accomplished through this "autoscope."

In his work *On the Threshold of the Unseen*,

Sir William Barrett suggests the term "autoscope" for any mechanical means whereby communication from the unknown may reach us. The unknown may be merely the medium's subconscious self; or it may be some supernormal faculty, such as clairvoyance, possessed by the medium; or it may be the influence of some extraneous mind, living or dead, acting upon the subconsciousness of the medium. The forked rod used by the dowser or water-finder is an autoscope, so is planchette, the ouija-board, etc. Although the last-named may appear slow and tedious, it becomes rapid in the hands of an expert sitter. Moreover, as will be seen directly, the ouija-board we use, and which I now proceed to describe, has many advantages.

The ouija-board is a table or board on which the letters of the alphabet are printed or written. The automatist's fingers rest on a small triangular table or "traveler," the underside tipped with three pads of felt. This traveler

glides lightly over the board and spells out messages, darting rapidly from letter to letter. The best ouija-board, the one I invariably use myself, is a card-table covered with green baize, on which the letters of the alphabet, the numbers from 0 to 9, and the words "yes" and "no" are laid, cut out separately on small pieces of cardboard; over this is placed a sheet of plate glass, the same size as the table. The traveler consists of a small triangular piece of wood, about half an inch thick, shod with three small pieces of carpet felt and having on top a piece of soft rubber material on which the fingers rest. I think experimenters, who try the ouija-board, will, if they have any psychic power, soon be amazed at the rapidity with which the traveler flies from letter to letter. In our own circle the words come through so quickly that it is almost impossible to read them, and it requires an experienced short-hand-writer to take them down when the traveler moves at its maximum speed. At the

ouija-board the co-operation of two automatists seems best; three seems to create confusion.

Automatism, practiced with patience and perseverance by any of the methods I have mentioned, presents very interesting phenomena. By means of it results of many and varied kinds may be obtained. During the six years in which I have sat more or less regularly at the ouija-board, I have had many interesting and evidential messages purporting to come from those who have passed over or those who were asleep or in a state of trance. I have found, as I shall show later, that for some unexplained reason automatism awakes in the medium supernormal powers which he or she does not possess in the normal state. Successful experiments in so-called psychometry may be made in this way, and a faculty for prevision undoubtedly shows itself sometimes. Of course, it is an open question whether these powers are merely awakened in the medium, or

whether an external influence is at work, as it professes to be. It is, I think, not advisable that an experimenter should advance any positive opinion on this subject. I am quite convinced that he or she is in a supernormal state when sitting, and consequently is handicapped in criticising results. My own impression is that in most cases results are not by any means due entirely to the sitters' subconsciousness, but it is a matter which it is almost impossible to prove one way or the other.

It is best I should leave my readers to form their own opinions about the incidents which follow; but for the sake of convenience, and to avoid the constant repetition of qualifying phrases, I shall set down occurrences in the form in which they came to me; that is, I shall assume that the messages come, as they purport to come, from intelligences outside the medium's subconsciousness, although this is a matter in which I still prefer to hold my personal judgment in suspense.

CHAPTER II

The Personality of the Control

I HAVE headed this chapter "The Personality of the Control," and before I proceed further perhaps it is best that I should define the terms "control" and "communicator."

By "control" I mean an influence which associates itself with the medium and his sittings, and which appears to act in many cases as organizer at the other side. These controls introduce and fetch communicators, and frequently advise and help the mediums by explaining how matters stand in the Unseen. Many people, who have worked with these controls, believe that they act as amanuenses or

interpreters between the medium and the unseen communicator. As far as I can tell, this has not been proved to be the case. I should say, rather, that controls arrange the séance and decide who among those who wish to speak from the other side shall communicate. These controls generally give themselves quaint names, and sometimes say they have lived in distant countries many hundreds of years ago. This is not always the case, but it has been so with the majority of those I have come across.

By "communicator" I mean the influence introduced by the control, or who comes without the help of a control, and gives his personal history, or states that he is a friend or relative of someone present. Such communicator may either have passed over or merely be asleep or drowsy.

In the course of sittings extending over six or seven years many influences have spoken through our small circle. Of these some were obviously frauds, and impersonations were

frequent. These disappointments are most dispiriting to the novice in psychic experiments. It must always be borne in mind that in order to attain to any firm ground from which one may review one's work and venture to form a judgment as to whether we are or are not in touch with the spirit world, a mass of evidence must be accumulated. This, of course, demands great patience and perseverance, and the experimenter must judge for himself whether the achieved results justify the expenditure of time and labor. If the results are important to him, he must not be discouraged by many back-slidings, and he must be prepared to keep careful records of sittings, good and bad; this is essential when he comes to the summing-up of evidence.

I propose to deal here with the most marked personalities among our controls, showing how—even allowing that these entities are merely subconsciousness, parts of our mentality which appear only under abnormal con-

ditions—they preserve certain characteristics which are so striking that there is no possibility of confusing one personality with another.

I shall first describe a control who has been of great service to us in experimental work. He is, in fact, the only influence who has aided and abetted us in applying tests to our experiments, who is willing and ready to do so and proud of his powers in this line. As a rule we find controls most unwilling to submit to tests of any kind; indeed, they are as indignant at such a suggestion as one might expect a person to be who walked into a drawing-room and was subjected to a personal examination by his host. During the winter of 1914 a small circle of sitters—the Rev. S. H., Mr. L., and myself—did very regular work at the ouija-board twice weekly, and a great deal of interesting matter came through from various controls. We worked blindfold. I can answer for myself, and I believe for my fellow-sitters, that

never in the course of all the months we sat together did we see the board while communications were coming through, nor did any of us know at the time what these communications were, as they were recorded in silence by a friend, who was obliged to take them down in shorthand, such was the rapidity with which the traveler moved from letter to letter.

At the second or third sitting of the circle referred to, Peter Rooney made his appearance. He stated that he was an American Irishman; that he had had a most undesirable career and spent much of his life in jail; that ten days before he communicated with us he had thrown himself under a tram-car in Boston and had been killed. Sir William Barrett, having made careful inquiries both from the Governor of the State prison at Boston, Mass., and from the Chief of Police in that city, found Peter Rooney's tale an entire fabrication. A certain Peter Rooney had fallen from a tram-car in August, 1910, had suffered from a scalp

wound, but was alive in 1914, as far as could be ascertained.

On being upbraided by us for assuming a name and identity not his own, Peter admitted that he had no desire that we should know who he was, and that he had adopted this name as "it was as good as any other." He stated that he had been interested in psychical research in his lifetime, and wished to assist investigations of supernormal phenomena now that he had "passed over." He refused absolutely to give us any further information about himself.

Peter has a burning desire to shine as a "test" control; he prefers us to work blindfold, and he is rashly desirous to attempt experiments. He is most uncertain in results, but, given a quiet room and his own mediums, he can do remarkable things. He is a rather primitive creature, has very strong likes and dislikes, and is very vain and fond of a display of his powers.

Early in our sittings he explained that he

used various movements on the board to express his feelings—love, hate, pleasure, annoyance, surprise, etc. We became quite familiar with these movements, and, blindfold as we always were, we quite realized Peter's changes of mood. Working under new conditions, a strange sitter, a disarranged alphabet, etc., Peter begins by a very careful examination of the alphabet; he moves in and out between the letters until he has traversed the entire board, and in case the letters are not in the usual order he notes the fact carefully. He is most sensitive to noise; it seems to disturb and annoy him. He starts at the sound of a clock striking or any noise in the street, and asks what it is. He is most impatient, and makes no allowance for any hesitation on the part of the person reading and noting down his messages, addressing the unfortunate individual occupied in this somewhat difficult task as "Fool!" if he asks that a word or sentence be repeated.

Among the experiments which proved suc-

cessful with Peter, I note a few of the most remarkable. He was asked on one occasion to read something in the room, a sentence from a book or newspaper of which the sitters knew nothing. He selected a page from a calendar of twelve pages; the calendar was taken from the wall by one of the recorders; it was turned over at random, the recorder carefully avoiding looking at it, and also taking the additional precaution of placing a screen between it and the medium, Mr. L., who was already blindfolded securely. The exposed leaf of the calendar was then placed under the glass, still carefully screened. It proved, when the transcript and calendar were compared, that this calendar had rather long quotations for each month. The page which was copied turned out to be an early spring month, which had been covered over long before; the sitting was in the late winter.

Peter read the entire page, including the long quotation, perfectly correctly. Of course,

in this case it may be open to question whether Mr. L., in whose house the calendar was, might not have had the quotation in his subconscious mind. I do not think this was probable, but I quite admit that it was possible. But even then it must be taken into account that there were twelve pages for his "subconsciousness" to choose from, and it would be at the best exceedingly good guessing, as well as remarkable memorizing, if this were the explanation of what occurred.

Peter was, and is still, very fond of telepathic experiments. He used to ask the people present to choose a number or a letter or even a word unknown to the sitters, and to write it on a piece of paper, and hold it under the ouija-table out of their range of vision. The traveler would then make a sudden dive over to the place where the paper was held, examine it most carefully by dipping over the table, touching the paper on which the numbers were written, and generally dart back to the correct

letters or numbers on the board. It must always be borne in mind that the sitters were blindfolded, and knew nothing of the result at the time. Peter is a fairly expert graphologist, and can tell character by handwriting as well as the average professional. If a letter is laid under the glass the traveler goes over, examines it carefully, rubbing the glass above the writing several times, darts back, begins generally by mentioning the sex of the writer, then by degrees and with many careful examinations of the writing gives a character-sketch which generally proves fairly correct. With this experiment care is always taken, of course, that the handwriting is that of persons unknown to the sitters. Another successful experiment we have tried with Peter is that one sitter should be blindfolded, and that the other, with eyes open, should receive a short message from him. The message is not read aloud. Conditions are then reversed: the sitter who was blindfolded has his eyes open; the other

sitter is blindfolded, the letters of the alphabet are mixed, and Peter is asked to repeat the message. Having done so, both sitters are blindfolded, the letters are mixed again, and Peter, for the third time, spells out the same message. The average success of this experiment was about 90 per cent.

I mention these experiments as they serve to illustrate Peter's character as a test control. Who Peter is or was we do not know, but from years of acquaintance with him on the ouija-board he has become a very clearly marked personality to us. He evidently belongs to the lower middle class; is far from polished in his manners; has very strong likes and dislikes; is a very vain and rather capricious creature, rejoicing in his own importance, and very fond of display; intelligent, but not in the least intellectual; very unwilling to admit other controls to any sitting he takes part in—he is, in fact, an amusing and rather inelegant person, and seems to regard the ouija-board as a means

of displaying a limited number of conjuring tricks. He is very particular about the mediums through whom he communicates, and seems to gather his power to "see without eyes" from some unknown quality in certain sitters. I have found only a few people with whom he can do blindfold work; he rather despises sittings with open eyes, and unless a medium is present who has the quality necessary for blindfold sitting he seldom comes.

I now pass on to a control who is an entire contrast to Peter Rooney in every respect. This entity calls himself "Eyen," and says he was an Egyptian priest who served in the temple of Isis in the reign of Rameses II. He professes to have been attracted to the sittings at my house by the fact that I possess a piece of cerecloth in which his mummy was wrapped. Eyen is not a test control like Peter; he cannot do any ouija-work with blindfold sitters; he avoids all experiments as quite beneath him. He is extremely sentimental, much inclined to

flatter his mediums, and most untrustworthy in his statements and in the controls he professes to send us, who generally prove to be Eyen himself in fancy dress. He also is most retentive in his hold of sittings, and anxious to exclude other controls. I have known him to "block the telephone," as he calls it, for a month at a time, and exclude any communication except his own; the only means we have found useful in driving him away has been to hypnotize both mediums and suggest that Eyen should not be permitted to speak. This has generally proved successful—for a time at least; in my own case the driving out of Eyen always produced a struggle. When the suggestion that he should go has been made to me, when under hypnotic influence, I have been considerably shaken by him in a rather unpleasant way.

Eyen interested me for several reasons; he professed in the beginning of our acquaintance to cultivate my psychic powers and those of

my fellow-sitter. I had repeatedly tried automatic writing without success. One evening, about three or four months after he appeared, Eyen told me he had brought a spirit-light for me, and that I was to give mine to the friend who sat with me, who had none. I asked how this could be done. The reply was that Eyen would put his hand on my head, and I was to place my hand on the head of my friend, and thus the lights would be transferred. I asked, "What will the result of gaining more light be?" Eyen replied, "You will gain psychic power—you will soon find you can do automatic writing, and your friend will perhaps draw automatically." On the particular night I speak of no further power was developed in myself or my friend, but on the next occasion on which we sat Eyen suggested that I might try to write. I did so with a completely successful result; automatic writing came through quite easily to me. The drawing also was successful to a certain extent; the subjects Eyen

permitted to come through were very limited! At first only mummies were drawn, and later what Eyen called "Nile flowers." These were conventional in design and somewhat like the lotus. At first these results could only be obtained when my friend and I sat together; after a short time Eyen said that while Mr. X.'s influence was still in my hand I should be able to write. This I found was the case, but my own strength must have increased, as gradually I found I got automatic writing by myself without difficulty. Eyen has proved a fraud and a liar in most ways, and he has been driven repeatedly from the board by us in consequence; but he has a very definite personality, and his smoothness, flattery, and falseness are part of it. He is a most sentimental person, full of imagination, and he possesses decided powers in the direction of fiction. More than once he has spelt out most sensational tales to us, the plots of which might quite well be of service to a writer in search of

melodrama. He tells us stories of life in ancient Egypt, and describes the rites in which he took part in the Temple of Isis. He has also told us most sensational stories of the present day, and one very striking Italian tale which came through at 12 A.M. while the clocks were striking one New Year's Eve.

The tale runs as follows:

Long ago in an Italian town there lived a most beautiful woman. She was much sought after and had many lovers, but she cared only for one. Now, this beautiful woman was a most enigmatical creature, and was possessed of a strange smile that reminded one of the picture of Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci. Her lovers made no way with her. She always kept them at a distance.

She was attracted by this particular man because he had never loved any woman; he did not seek her company or friendship in any way, and she determined to conquer him. Long and hopelessly she strove to attract him,

with no success. But at last she had her wish; he fell desperately in love with her. Step by step they came nearer and nearer to each other, until, at last, one night he asked her to give him all a woman can give a man. She was furious at this insult to her honor, and refused indignantly, and in a rage the man put an end to her life. (When Eyen came to this point I asked, "Is that all? It's not a very original story.")

"Wait," said Eyen. "The murdered woman left her lover something as a revenge for her death. She left him the Mona Lisa smile, which had protected her from men, so that he might be protected from all women and never love again."

Eyen's latest development is in the rôle of poet! He has taken to writing verse, invariably addressed to one of his original mediums, Mr. X. or myself. Mr. X. has driven him from the board of late years, and refused to hold any converse with him. The verses

which Eyen addressed to Mr. X. consist of curses, reproaches, and regrets for this insult, while those addressed to me are all suavity and most flattering in tone. These verses came through me, and a friend, Mr. W., who "sits" here frequently. They are more or less correct as to versification, though neither this friend nor I are guilty either openly or secretly of writing poetry!

The next control who occurs to me calls himself "Astor." He professes to be the "guide" of an intimate friend of mine, Miss C., who lives in my house. We frequently sit together, and Astor appears invariably and opens the séance. He controls Miss C.'s hand most powerfully; all the force, mental and physical, seems to come through her, and I add probably a kind of balance only. Astor is, of course, chiefly interested in Miss C.'s concerns, but in so far as hers are connected with mine, he is deeply interested in me also, and often devotes most of his attention to me at a sitting.

He dives across the table towards me, and presses the traveler against my arm, as if contact with me gave him insight into my mental state.

Astor is an intelligent creature, not given much to flattery—indeed, often very plain-spoken. His leading characteristic is that he is clairvoyant and sees vivid pictures of the future. His prophecies are indefinite as to time. He admits that time cannot be measured in his sphere. He has predicted some quite unforeseen events in a most remarkable way. In one case he made what seemed a most rash and absurd prophecy about a business affair of my own, at which I laughed, I remember, but within a week this totally unlikely event came true. Astor is very clear in his statements, does not hedge when questioned as Eyen does, and holds on to his predictions stoutly, although the course of time may not have justified them. He always maintains that they will come true if we have patience, and

that he cannot measure time. He is a much more rational creature than Peter or Eyen; generally ready to have his say, and then to allow others to speak, he is grave and moderate in tone, and allows no trifling on the part of his mediums.

The last control I shall speak of here is one of my own who is not yet an intimate acquaintance, as she came only a few months ago. She calls herself "Shamar," says she was a Hindoo, and that she is my spirit guide, Eyen being merely "the guide of my astral!" Shamar has undertaken to conduct most of my sittings lately; she devotes herself to cultivating my powers by sending me genuine communications. She says she is very fond of sending me messages from living persons who are asleep or drowsy. In these cases absolute proof is, of course, possible sometimes. Twice lately I had conversations with friends who stated they were in a drowsy state, and the information I received through them proved

true in every respect. So far as I know her, Shamar is sincere; she makes no magnificent promises, and she has been very faithful in bringing interesting communicators. She is quite different from Peter, Eyen, and Astor. She has no sense of humor; she never indulges in anything of an imaginative nature; she never foretells future events; she comes and offers to bring someone who will interest me, or if I (as I seldom do) ask for any special person she will send him if she can. She does not indulge in any platitudes; she is simple and apparently truthful; she seems to believe she has certain work to do at a sitting, and she does it to the best of her ability.

I may add that both Astor and Shamar have remarkable gifts for elucidating the history of objects placed on the board. "Psychometry," as it is commonly called, is a gift which both controls possess, apparently; but how much of this is due to special sitters I am unable to say.

CHAPTER III

The Communicator—Evidence of Survival

I HAVE now arrived at the most vitally interesting question for us all in connection with psychical research. Have we any evidence of the survival and identity of those who have left the visible world? Is any light thrown on this great problem by messages received through the medium? And from my small personal experience I can reply with sincerity I have had some evidence which, if not entirely convincing, points so strongly to the fact that we survive what is called death that it requires more credulity to doubt the fact than to believe it. But any evidence I have

had of the survival of those who have died is slight, and part of what has been convincing to me is not so from a scientific point of view. In this chapter I shall review briefly my experience with what seem genuine communicators. I shall give an account first of those I think evidential from the "test" point of view and secondly some cases which, though not conclusive, were most convincing from the nature of the messages. I leave my readers to draw their own conclusions. If I may venture to advise persons who long to speak once more with those they have loved, who have vanished into darkness, I should say it is wise and sane not to make the attempt. The chances against genuine communication are ten to one; the disappointments and doubts connected with the experiment are great.

Personally, I would not make any effort to speak to the beloved dead through automatic writing or the ouija-board. The evidence they offer of their identity is too ephemeral and un-

satisfactory; and as I would not undertake these experiments for myself, I would not willingly help others to risk them, unless in very exceptional cases, when I had fully explained my own doubts on the subject and had undertaken no responsibility that the messages would be genuine. On the other hand, if, in the course of sittings at the ouija-table, dear and familiar names have appeared, I have patiently tried to discover whether they were genuine or the reverse, and in some cases, I am bound to admit, I was inclined to think that they were not impersonations.

I fear the observations I have just made may be very distasteful to many who approach this subject from the spiritualist point of view. I cannot offer these people any apology for my attitude. It may be that they receive genuine help and comfort from their faith in these manifestations from the Unseen; if so, I only trust that they may continue to find this comfort and help. But I do not attempt to address

them. What I have to say will interest the student of psychic matters only.

In almost all cases where a discarnate spirit professes to speak I ask for an account of its passing over. These accounts vary very little; they all retain the same features, though some are more detailed than others. In all cases a period of darkness is described as occurring almost immediately after death. This darkness appears to be a penance or purgatory for the soul left thus in lonely and silent meditation, and it is evidently a period of considerable suffering. Yet during this time of darkness the spirit seems to be permitted to speak to those on earth if such opportunity be offered to it. This state does not seem to last long, not more than a week or ten days, so far as I can judge from communicators who come repeatedly and speak of their present condition. They frequently say that when light came, someone was near them, who led them away to the place where their "work" was. What the

nature of this "work" is, they seem unable to explain. Many communicators, when describing their "passing," appear to have had a vision of the body before the darkness enveloped them. Frequently when soldiers killed in battle have spoken they became aware that they had died. They tell how the battlefield lay below them, with all the horror of its details, and how they saw their own bodies lying on the field. Sometimes the vision extends, and they see the body being carried away and buried. In the same way, some of those who die in their beds describe the body lying there as when the spirit rose from it. They can see the nurses preparing it for burial, the coffin, etc.

Beyond the period of darkness, I have had no clear or definite account of the region in which the spirit dwells or the nature of its occupations. Some sitters known to me, who approach the subject in a more religious and less experimental spirit than myself, have had

perfectly lucid accounts of the future state—even the flowers and animals in the sphere to which the spirit is led after the first darkness is past were described in detail. And in the communications received by this circle the meeting of those who had been dear to each other on earth seemed assured. All was peace, love, and tranquillity. The only promise of reunion I have obtained from any communicator is that those whose spirits are merged in each other in the fullest sense of the word—souls created at the same moment (though perhaps sent on their earthly pilgrimage at different times)—will be merged in each other in the future state.

From reviewing hundreds of messages from those who have passed away, I gather that the spirit retains its earth-memory for a time. The time seems to vary with the nature of the individual. The more rarefied and exalted the soul during its earth-life, the shorter its span of earth-memory seems to be after it has

passed through the barrier. These more highly developed souls seem gradually to rise into a region from which it is perilous to touch the earth atmosphere, except for a few minutes at a time. After this they disappear altogether. Quite lately I had an instance of this. The communicator was a connection of my own, a very refined, gentle, intellectual personality in his earth-life. He came to the ouija-board repeatedly for some time while I happened to be in touch with his family, and spoke in a way which was very evidential to them; he appeared to find it impossible to communicate for more than a few minutes at a time. Then there would be a long pause, and he would come again. He told us that after a time he would be unable to speak. He had died very suddenly, and seemed to have passed quickly to a state of great peace and happiness, though he gave us no account of his surroundings or occupations; he said it was for-

bidden, and would, in any case, be incomprehensible to those still alive.

I shall now give details of two cases of communications received by me in conjunction with another sitter (different in each case) through the ouija-board, which consisted of facts absolutely unknown to the mediums, and which were subsequently verified in every detail. The first of these two cases came through in the winter of 1913. Our circle—which I have already referred to in Chapter II—consisted at that time of three sitters—Mr. L., the Rev. S. H., and myself, and a friend who acted as amanuensis and shorthand-writer. During the sittings of this circle, which continued twice weekly for a year or more, we had most remarkable results—the more so because we sat blindfolded. I shall give a fuller account of these sittings in my chapter on Thought Transference. It seemed that the really marvelous power of "seeing without eyes" rested in this instance largely, or perhaps completely,

with Mr. L. After he had left Dublin and the circle was broken, the Rev. S. H. and I repeatedly tried to get messages blindfolded, but without success. I have succeeded in getting blindfold work through with other mediums, but none of them have the rapidity and certainty possessed by Mr. L.

The message in question came very slowly—quite unlike others we had had, which were spelt out so rapidly that our shorthand-writer could scarcely put them down quickly enough. It seemed that this communicator was very weak. She gave her name (I shall call her "Alice Franks"). Her address was a house in Upper Norwood, and she told us the name and date of the newspaper in which her death was announced. The message was not a long one; she described her last illness, and said death had just occurred, and had been a happy release from pain. The communication was not in itself especially interesting—many such come to a circle of practiced sitters—the evi-

dence of identity was what was remarkable. The lady was absolutely unknown to anyone present, but on investigation every statement made by her at the ouija-board proved correct.

Sir William Barrett was in a position to make a careful investigation of this case, which he kindly did, and learnt from the lady's relatives that the information we had received was undoubtedly genuine, and must have been conveyed to us in some supernormal manner.

I give here a portion of the scrip of this message:

Mrs. Travers Smith, the Rev. S. H., Mr. L. (All blindfolded.)

(For whom is this message?) Everybody. (Spell your name.) Alice Franks. (Can't you work quicker?) No. (Go on, please.) Your overbearing attitude will not make me go any faster. I lived and died at . . . Upper Norwood. (Did you die recently?) Yes. (What date?) . . . I was unconscious for many days; I believe that I passed over between Friday

and yesterday morning. (Have you anything special to say?) My pain was intense, and I am still in pain. Good-bye."

A more striking instance of evidence of identity is one which is quoted by Sir William Barrett in his recent book, *On the Threshold of the Unseen,* the "pearl tie-pin case." This came through one evening when my friend Miss C. and I were sitting together. As in the case of Alice Franks, this message was very brief, and Miss C. and I attached no importance to it at the time. The name of a young cousin of Miss C.'s was spelt out on the board. He had recently been killed at the front, and he stated that he had been engaged to a girl whose name and address he gave in full, and asked that his mother should be told that he wished her to give his fiancée his pearl tie-pin in memory of him. The boy was only nineteen when he was killed, and this seemed a most unlikely story. Miss C. laughed at it, and would not have investigated it but that I asked

her to write to the address given and discover if the person mentioned lived there. This letter was returned to Miss C. as incorrectly addressed, and we dismissed the case as hopeless. Some time afterwards the young officer's relatives heard that he had willed all his possessions to a girl whose name was the same as the one spelt out to us on the ouija-board—though the address was different—and to whom he had been privately engaged. This fact was absolutely unknown to his relatives.

Now, these two cases, to my thinking, can only be explained in one way—an ardent desire on the part of some external influence to communicate with this world. Surely it seems irrational to think that these messages came from any source other than the discarnate spirits of these two persons. Something more improbable and incredible may be suggested by way of explanation. I am inclined to believe what is obvious.

I give these instances as being two of the

most evidential we have had of survival. Others have come to us of a like nature, but they are few and far between compared to those to which I now pass: cases which do not furnish definite proof of identity, but which were most convincing in their substance and in the manner they were expressed.

The first I mention came from a brother of Miss C.'s, who was killed in Gallipoli. Miss C. did not sit until some time after his death, but almost immediately after she began, he came with urgent messages for his mother. Mrs. C. had been overwhelmed with grief at the loss of her son, and even after more than a year and a half she was quite inconsolable. Lieutenant C. had been a most pure and innocent-minded young man—a very spiritual person, in fact, and these messages were all of the same nature, begging Miss C. to tell his mother that her grief was keeping back his progress in the new sphere, and that he was unable to rise until she ceased to mourn for him. He de-

scribed himself as "caught in the miasma of desire that shrouds the earth." Miss C. told her mother, who made every effort to be more cheerful and forget her sorrow, and the last time Miss C.'s brother spoke to her he seemed to be getting free from the fetters which bound him to earth. He said he did not expect to be able to speak again. These messages were very convincing to Miss C. Those urging her to speak to her mother came through very rapidly, and gave her the sensation of intense anxiety and excitement.

I had a strange experience myself with a communicator—a man who had been a friend of mine for many years, and from whom I had been estranged for a long time before his death. This man died very suddenly of acute appendicitis, and on the evening of his death I happened to be sitting. A mutual friend of his and mine, who had passed over, communicated by the board, and asked me whether I knew that Mr. V. was dead. I said I did not,

and she suggested that I should ring up the private hospital where he was. I did so, and found that he had died about half an hour before. I returned to the board, and the same communicator told me that he would speak to me at the next sitting. He came the following week and for six weeks after, and we could get no other communications through. He seemed intensely anxious to explain the very complicated circumstances which had induced me to drop his acquaintance. This he did in a way which, I am bound to confess, I should never have thought of. At last his persistency wearied us, and I told him I could not speak to him any more. He replied that he would not try to come again, and bid me farewell with the remark, "Love and hate make life a ride in the dark."

The wording of these communications and the anxiety this man showed to explain very strange circumstances connected with his life left no doubt in my mind that I was speaking

directly to his discarnate spirit; but this is one of the cases that, from its private nature and also because there was no direct proof of identity further than what I have mentioned, could only appeal to those who knew him intimately.

Although Sir William Barrett has described the "Hugh Lane case" in his latest book, I feel my readers may be interested to hear what I have to say of it first hand. The circumstances were these: I knew Sir Hugh Lane personally, and had heard he had gone to America about a fortnight before the sinking of the *Lusitania.* I had no idea why he had gone or how long he intended to stay. About five o'clock on the day we heard of the loss of the *Lusitania,* I saw posters on my way home saying *"Lusitania* reported sinking." I did not buy a paper, and had no personal interest in the sinking ship, as I knew of no one on board. Sir Hugh Lane's name did not occur to me, probably because he had been in Amer-

ica such a very short time. A sitting was arranged for 8.30 o'clock that evening, and before we began I felt a strange sensation of depression, so much so that I went up to my bedroom and sat alone for a short time. I could not have said why this feeling got hold of me; there was no special reason for it that I knew of. At 8.30 o'clock I came down, and we began our sitting. The Rev. Savell Hicks recorded in silence, while Mr. Lennox Robinson and I sat blindfolded and talked to each other while the message was being spelled out by our hands. After a couple of minutes Mr. Hicks said, "Would you like to know who is speaking? It is Sir Hugh Lane, and he says he has been drowned, and was on board the *Lusitania.*" We were terribly shocked—we both knew Sir Hugh—and asked Mr. Hicks to read the message to us. It ran as follows: First the name of our usual control, Peter; then, "Pray for Hugh Lane." Then, on being asked who was speaking, "I am Hugh Lane;

all is dark," came through. At this moment a stop-press edition of the evening paper was called in the street, and Mr. Robinson ran down and bought one. When he came up to me he pointed to the name of Sir Hugh Lane among the passengers. We were both much distressed, but continued our sitting. Sir Hugh Lane described the scene on board the *Lusitania*. Panic, then boats lowered—"Women went first," he said. He stated that he was last in an overcrowded boat, fell over, and lost all memory until he "saw a light" at our sitting. He sent me a message about our last meeting which was quite evidential so far as I could tell, and gave me greetings and advice for very intimate friends of his and mine in Dublin. The number of his cabin and the name of a fellow-passenger given by him were incorrect, so far as I can discover.

This communication was very striking, but what followed was more evidential in my opinion. Sir Hugh Lane continued to come, and

at each sitting at which he appeared he begged us to restrain any efforts of those who might wish to erect a memorial gallery to him in Dublin. This he seemed to have a horror of. At the same time he was most anxious that we should make every effort to have the conditions of the codicil to his will carried out. He wishes his pictures to come back to this city, and is much disturbed because the trustees of the National Gallery are very justly reluctant to restore them to Dublin.

We had a very strange sitting—Mr. Lennox Robinson and I—last September, at which Sir William Barrett was present. Before the sitting I had said to Sir William Barrett that I thought the remarks of various people were justified who considered the "Hugh Lane case" evidential to the sitters—who knew him personally—but not to the outside public. After a communication had come through from a man who said he died in Sheffield, and which in some particulars proved to be correct—it

was not possible to investigate them all—Sir Hugh Lane came to the board, seized Mr. Robinson's arm, as he always does, and after much difficulty in reading the message we discovered that he was much annoyed with me because of the way I had spoken to Sir William Barrett about his first communication on the night after the *Lusitania* sank. He was most violent on this occasion, seizing Mr. Robinson's arm and driving it about so forcibly that the traveler fell off the table more than once. Since then whenever we—Mr. Robinson and I—have sat together, the same thing has happened. Sir Hugh has come repeatedly, and always with the same message. He begs that we shall believe that it was really he who spoke to us that night when the *Lusitania* sank. He says any future words he speaks to us or anyone else will be discredited if we put no faith in the first he spoke after he died.

The latest message we have had from Sir Hugh referred to the Lane Picture meeting

which was to be held at the Mansion House, Dublin, on January 29th, 1918. It came to Mr. Robinson and me on January 22nd, 1918. It ran as follows:

"Hugh Lane." (We said we wanted Peter instead, as we wished to do telepathic experiments.) "I will not go. I want to speak, and this is my chance. I want you to go to that meeting and tell them I can still let the world know my wishes. Those pictures must be secured for Dublin; tell them I cannot rise or get rest: it tortures me. Do you believe me? I am Hugh Lane!" The last sentence was spelt out very passionately. Mr. Robinson's arm was seized furiously.

These communications from Sir Hugh Lane are very evidential and convincing to us who knew him; to the scientific observer I do not think there is anything which could be called a genuine proof of identity, although certainly one fact was mentioned entirely outside our subconsciousness—i.e., that Sir Hugh was on

board the lost ship. It must be remembered that this was spelt out before we bought the stop-press with a list of the passengers. I am bound to confess that the fact that the communicator was so excitable on and after the sitting in September did more to persuade Mr. Robinson and me that it was really Sir Hugh than the whole *Lusitania* message. I have little or no doubt that the influence which came was actually Sir Hugh Lane, but I do not ask my skeptical readers who have not felt the tremendous energy of this communicator to share my belief.

It seems to me that it is very difficult for persons who are not practical workers to criticise these very intricate psychical phenomena. The outside public is first thrilled by the supernatural nature of a communication such as Sir Hugh Lane's on the night after the shipwreck; then comes the very natural reaction towards doubt, unless the absolute identity of the spirit is proved. I find, when

I begin to criticise the experiences of other people, that this doubt increases until it seems almost impossible that there is a fragment of proof of survival in most of the messages which appear very convincing to sitters. From long experience, however, I know that it is best to suspend judgment in matters of this kind until one has had ample time to consider the circumstances.

Let us, for a moment, consider this case of Sir Hugh Lane from the point of view of the convinced spiritualist; let us allow that the spirit of the drowned man made a supreme effort, and succeeded in speaking to us; let us endeavor to analyze his position.

The communication came through only a few hours after the sinking of the *Lusitania.* There had without doubt been a period of intense excitement and anxiety for Sir Hugh while he was still alive; then a period of unconsciousness, let us hope, and then the slow awakening to find "all was dark," and that he

was no longer in this world. Did he speak to us as if in a dream? Was he fully conscious? Did he communicate directly or through a control? Who can tell? Living persons who have passed through intense nervous excitement are generally dazed; their memories are confused and their statements are frequently far from accurate. If we questioned them at such a moment about the past, we should probably have very hazy and distracted replies to our questions. Take the case, so fresh in the minds of many at the present time, of persons who have just escaped the perils of a severe air-raid and have been close to the danger zone. How many of such persons could give small details a few hours afterwards of the circumstances in which they were placed—the number of the house they rushed into, etc.? When we analyze the messages of those who have gone suddenly through the gates of death, are we not somewhat unreasonable if we expect them to stand a cross-examination as though they stood in a

law court? If their answers to our questions are vague and unsatisfying, let us remember that we are speaking normally of earthly affairs with our earth-memories strong and fresh, and that our communicators' difficulties are unknown and probably incomprehensible to us. I feel that if we interest ourselves at all in such messages from the dead, we should extend our sympathy to the spirit; we should invariably assume at sittings that communicators are genuine. How can we hope to arrive at any fair conclusion if we judge supernormal circumstances by those that are familiar to us, without making any allowance for the fact that our difficulties are probably as nothing compared to those at the other side? Many persons appear to think that when we die we become possessed at the moment of supernatural powers. In fact, they believe that "we shall be changed" means far more than that we lose the body. I do not think there is any indication from any source that

when we wake again we shall have suddenly acquired powers other than those we possessed in the earth-life.

The spirit of Sir Hugh Lane, after regaining consciousness and memory, found in some mysterious way that it was possible to send a message back to the earth through us. We had been friends of his, though not very intimate with him. In the dazed and confused state in which he was, he grasped at anything which would identify him in our memories. "Pray for Hugh Lane" came, he said, from the control who permitted him to speak. We, very naturally, asked him questions which would admit of concrete proof—the number of his cabin, etc.—and his replies were, I believe, incorrect; they came slowly, I remember, as if it was an effort to try to recall these details. What he seemed ardently to desire was that we should give messages to very close friends of his in Dublin, to let them know he had not suffered. He hardly mentioned his

pictures, which were the great interest of his life; his state of mind can hardly have been clear and calm. Allowance should be made for all this by those who criticise the message in cold blood. I hold no brief for the identity of Sir Hugh Lane on this occasion; I merely take the case as an example. I am almost convinced it was he who spoke to us at this and at many other sittings, but I do not ask my readers to believe me on the slender evidence I give them. I ask them, before making up their minds that such communications are true or false, to analyze them and weigh and balance the situation.

Before I finish this chapter I wish to draw attention to a point which is a very interesting one in my opinion. Why should any influence—control or communicator—be attracted to the séance-room? What draws his attention to the fact that a sitting is taking place? This is a question I almost invariably put to controls and communicators, and their replies

to the question are almost always the same. They state that a bright light attracted them—and the stronger the medium, the brighter the light. When I am sitting myself, and ask, "What attracted you to this room?" the answer generally is, "I saw a woman wrapped in flame." Sometimes they describe a brilliant light on the head of the medium, but as psychic strength increases the light seems to envelop the whole body of the sensitive. This light or flame appears to be pale—"a clear white fire," which seems to grow more vivid as the medium becomes more in touch with the "spirit world." I often ask the communicator when several persons are present, "How many people can you see in this room?" Generally the reply is, "I can only see you." But if any particularly sensitive person is there, the traveler moves towards him, and, having apparently had a good look at him, says he can see him dimly, as if in a mist. Voices other than the medium's seem difficult to hear. A question is sel-

dom replied to unless asked by one of the sitters.

I have observed that controls, when in doubt about some fact concerning one of the sitters or anyone else present involved in the message which is being spelt out, dart across towards the person in question, and make obvious efforts to get into personal contact with him or her. The traveler waits opposite the individual whose ideas it desires to analyze, and presses against his arm, or is obviously glad if his hand is laid for a moment on the indicator.

Another interesting point is the association of the controls with certain communicators. Each control seems to have his or her private circle of acquaintances to draw from, and if you can "tell a man by his friends," you can do so in the case of controls. Sir Hugh Lane never comes through any control but Peter Rooney, who professes to "keep the unseen barrier that is supposed to separate this world

from the other sphere," and who admitted Sir Hugh in the first instance. Eyen's communicators are most untrustworthy, and generally parade fantastically in fancy costumes of an improbable kind, whereas Shamar's circle is an interesting one. She is careful to send people who are worth talking to, and takes some time to find them.

A curious fact, perhaps worth mentioning, is that I find when a pause comes while the control is seeking a communicator, or when the traveler is at rest for any reason, quite foolish and irrelevant little messages are liable to be spelt out. These are the silliest things, and suggest that spirits of the "poltergeist" type are playing with the traveler. I have also sometimes observed a struggle at the board. This is conveyed to the mediums by a very broken communication and very spasmodic and violent movements on the part of the traveler. We are generally told when this happens that

one entity has had a struggle with another to gain access to the sitting.

In the chapter which follows I shall speak of telepathy and thought transference and its connection with automatism, which is one of the most interesting subjects in the range of psychic study.

CHAPTER IV

Telepathy and Automatism

TELEPATHY or thought transference is to my mind the most interesting of all psychic studies. When we have convinced ourselves by simple experiments that thought can be transmitted from one brain to another without speech, even when the agent and percipient are separated from each other by a considerable distance, we are in a better position to criticise and understand much that comes through by automatic methods. On the other hand, the ultra-skeptical person seems to me to be too completely dazzled by thought-transference results. Telepathy accounts for so much that one is inclined to believe it ac-

counts for everything, or at least divides the field with the subliminal self. Much as has been done by telepathy and the subliminal theory in throwing light on psychic matters, I believe that in the case of certain people their range of vision has been narrowed by too close a study of these two subjects, and it has therefore been more difficult for them to take a fair view of the evidence before them.

The first point for those who propose to experiment in thought transference is to discover who can transmit and who receive. These two qualities seldom go together, and the only method by which the agent and the percipient can be discovered is by a series of experiments, most of which are likely to be unsuccessful. When, however, the conclusion has been arrived at as to which experimenter is likely to transmit and which receive, a step in advance has been made. The simplest tests of thought transference are the best to begin with. Two operators sitting in the same room quitely de-

cide what the agent shall concentrate on—a card, a number or letter written on a sheet of paper, or a person known to both of them. I have tried some of these simple experiments very successfully with Mr. X., who has remarkable power as a transmitter: the proportion of successful experiments of this kind was about seven unsuccessful against ten successful. In almost every case in which Mr. X. touched my hand I got the right letter or number immediately, but we usually avoided contact. On one occasion, in the case of his choosing persons we both knew, two out of three experiments of this kind succeeded very rapidly. In the first case I got the name of the person chosen most vividly. I saw the name "William" written very distinctly, and asked at once if that was correct. In the second case, almost immediately after I attempted to "receive," the face of a mutual friend of ours came before me perfectly distinctly, as if it was a framed portrait. This picture came

almost at once, like a flash. I find invariably that if the thought is not transmitted at once it is useless to make an effort to receive it; I find precisely the same result with automatic experiments in which a control acts as receiver. Experiments carried on when the agent and percipient are separated from each other by a long distance are often very fairly successful, I believe, but I have no personal experience of them.

I have seen more of telepathy in connection with automatism than as practiced in the class of experiment I have mentioned. I believe from long observation of many sensitives that automatism of any kind produces an abnormal condition in the sitter; I imagine under these abnormal conditions various qualities come to the surface which are dormant in the normal state. I think that clairvoyance may appear in a person (who shows none of that power otherwise) when at the ouija-board or when doing automatic writing, and I believe that

telepathic powers are developed under the same circumstances. I think further that, if the atmosphere is full of some important public event unknown to the sensitive, it may reach him through automatism.

I had a striking instance of this in my own circle. One evening Miss D. and I sat at the ouija-board, and to our surprise no results whatever came through. This was most annoying, as we generally had most interesting sittings. We had given it up in despair, and Miss D. was about to go home, when I asked her to try once more for a few minutes. We sat down and the following message was spelt out immediately and very rapidly: "Ship sinking; all hands lost. William East overboard. Women and children weeping and wailing—sorrow, sorrow, sorrow." We had no idea what the message meant. No more came through. Just then I heard a "stop-press" being called in the street, and, wondering what could have happened, I ran down and

bought a paper. The news was that the *Titanic* had gone down. I believe that the name "William East" was incorrect—we had no one present to follow the message, which came very rapidly and excitedly—I believe the name must have been "William Stead." For from that day forth and for weeks after he came persistently to the ouija-board, telling us about his death and begging to be allowed to materialize, that we might be sure it was really he. Whether telepathy would account for the first Hugh Lane communication I am not sure; I am much more inclined to believe that it was really Sir Hugh who spoke to us.

Mr. X. and I have had some very interesting sittings with Mr. E., who seems to have remarkable power as a transmitter. He is not in the least mediumistic; his presence at a sitting leads to most curious telepathic results. Mr. E. has lived abroad a great deal, chiefly in South Africa, and has many stories of adventure to relate of a striking kind. On two occa-

sions he sat with us, no other person being present. He did not touch the board either time. His "spirit guide" professed to come to us, and he questioned her as to whether she could give him any information about certain persons of whom Mr. X. and I had never heard. On these two evenings amazing tales were spelt out by Mr. E.'s guide, all the particulars of which—so far as he could verify them—were correct. One of these tales concerned a man whose death had been very mysterious. He had been found drowned in a lake, and it was never known whether he had committed suicide or whether it was a case of murder. This man described circumstances before the night of his death which Mr. X. and I were, of course, quite unaware of, and which Mr. E. says were accurate. He then explained how his death occurred, and described his mental state beforehand. The other tale, which was long and circumstantial, was also

correct in every detail, with added information, new to Mr. E.

Now, these cases may be taken in two ways. Either Mr. X. (or more probably I myself, as I am a better recipient) caught these reflections from the mind of Mr. E., and subconsciously added suitable endings to both tales, or—as I must confess I think more probable—the communicators were the persons they professed to be. In any case I think Mr. E.'s presence influenced our sittings, and these stories, drawn directly from his mind without contact with the autoscope, may take their place fittingly in a chapter on thought transference.

Another interesting instance of the same kind occurred one evening when Miss C. and I were the sitters, Mr. Y. being present. The control described an old castle which had just been bought by Mr. Y., and told him the place was haunted. The hauntings, as described by the control, involved in their explanation a

romantic story of old times. At last I said to Mr. Y., "Do you think we should let this communication wander on like this? Does it interest you?" He replied, "Very much. This is the plot of my new play." Miss C. and I knew nothing whatever of the work Mr. Y. was engaged on just then.

Another development of telepathy with the ouija-board is the transmission of messages from living persons who are asleep. My Hindoo control, Shamar, is very fond of sending these to us, and lately two or three came through which I have verified. I was in London in December, 1917, and spent Christmas with a relative at South Kensington. On December 26th my cousin and I had a short sitting, rather late at night, about 10.30 or 11 o'clock. Shamar came, and promised us something interesting. The name of my cousin's brother was spelt out on the board; he described in what room he was sitting, and said he was asleep before the fire. The message

was a short one, and I have not the record of it by me, but it was proved correct in every detail.

After this the name of Mr. D.—an intimate personal friend of mine—appeared. He stated that he was not sound asleep, and therefore the message would come in jerks, which it did. He said he was sitting before the fire in his drawing-room; no one else was in the room. I asked him to give my sister a message from me; he said, "Sorry, I can't; I shall forget all this when I wake." He then went on to tell me what had happened on Christmas night—quite a long communication—and mentioned a friend of his and mine who had come in, and whom I certainly should not have expected would be there. He then said good-bye, and that he could not speak any more, as he was getting more wakeful. This was an absolutely correct statement of facts, as I found out when I came back to Dublin.

Now, I leave it to my readers to decide

whether these last cases should or should not be included under "telepathy." Did Mr. D.'s spirit escape from his body and speak to me, or did I get in touch with him in some mysterious way and read his mind? I do not attempt to answer the question.

The last instance of Shamar's powers in this way occurred only two nights before I write this. I sat for a very few minutes, at her request. I had been sitting earlier, and she asked me to sit again late, as she wanted to try an experiment, at about 12.30 o'clock A.M. She sent a friend of mine, who said he was asleep. He gave me a short message explaining a circumstance which had been rather puzzling to me in a manner I had never thought of. I attached little or no importance to this, but next morning I received a letter from this friend, explaining the same matter exactly as he did at the ouija-board on the occasion I have mentioned. These communications during sleep seem to me to offer a very inter-

esting problem to the investigator. I hope to make further attempts of the kind with Shamar's aid.

During the sittings which I alluded to in another chapter, in which the circle consisted of the Rev. S. H., Mr. L., and myself, we made various interesting telepathic experiments. Perhaps, as these sittings were carried on under unusual conditions (I mean that few circles, so far as I know, succeeded in getting "blindfold" results at the ouija-board) I may as well describe them here. The very remarkable mediumistic powers of Mr. L. were discovered in this way. A circle of seven or eight people used to meet at my house once a week. We had two boards in the same room at that time, which I found was quite a mistake, One evening the Rev. S. H. brought a gentleman with him, who was quite unknown to me, and asked me to sit with him. Mr. L. had never done much psychic work before. He and I tried to get results in the usual way, with

open eyes, but though the traveler moved a good deal, no word or sentence was spelt. After a short time the Rev. S. H., who had often attempted blindfold work with me with no success, suggested that Mr. L. and I should try the experiment. I laughed, and said it was hardly likely that we should succeed, considering we had not got one coherent sentence or even a word with open eyes. However, we were both blindfolded, and almost immediately messages began to come through, to our amazement. That night we had three short but quite coherent messages. We then decided to sit regularly; the Rev. S. H. joined us, and Mr. W., who was an expert shorthand-writer, kindly undertook to read the board and record for us. We arranged that he should do this silently, so that none of us sitters should know what was spelt out. We chatted to each other, and often when we were laughing Mr. W. would tell us something very tragic was coming through. These sittings continued for a

year or more, twice weekly; we never had an evening without ample and generally interesting results. The method of blindfolding was as follows: A close black satin mask was fitted for each sitter; no glimpse of the board could be had through these unless the head was tilted far back. We did not consider these masks sufficient for "test" conditions, however, so when visitors were present we wore outside our masks opaque veils of black cotton material extending from the forehead to the waist, which greatly added to our discomfort. During these sittings we had a most remarkable prophecy about the Balkan War which had just broken out. We had long messages in French and German, and we did many interesting experiments, some of which I have described in Chapter II. Early in the course of these sittings Peter Rooney appeared, and assisted us in every way. He was most amusing in the manner in which he reproved us if we missed a sitting, declaring he had wasted his

time waiting for us, and grumbling steadily for the first quarter of an hour. Peter Rooney has undoubted telepathic power as a receiver. He seems sometimes to require a human mind to work through, and sometimes he can do without, which is strange. One of the cases in which he was able to read something unknown to any sitter present was when he spelt out the sheet of the calendar which I described in Chapter II, and in that instance it is just possible, though very unlikely, that Mr. L. may have had a "picture" of the sheet in his subconscious mind. Other times, when letters, words, numbers, or colors were placed under the glass, they were generally known to at least one person present. I remember on one occasion when the Rev. S. H. was observing, Mr. L. and I being the sitters, the Rev. S. H. wrote a number on a scrap of paper and asked Peter to read it from his mind (he did not lay it on the board). Peter paused, then gave 3, which was wrong—the number was 5. The

Rev. S. H. told him he was mistaken; Peter then asked the Rev. S. H. to touch Mr. L.'s hand, and when he did so spelt out 5 immediately. Another way in which we tested Peter's powers of thought transference was by the observer taking a scrap of colored paper at random from a box and laying it on the board without seeing it. In the case when I was sitting this invariably succeeded. Peter touched the color with the traveler, and spelt it out correctly without apparent difficulty. What seemed curious was that another lady sat with Mr. L. and the Rev. S. H. several times at my house, and although the fact of her taking my place made no difference whatever otherwise, Peter, could do no "color-reading" with her.

Another case in which Peter failed to work without a transmitter occurred at Sir William Barrett's house at Kingstown one evening when Dr. MacDougall of Oxford was present. I had arranged that in my absence one of my maids should disarrange my drawing-room in

some way unknown to me; that she should decide beforehand what she would do, write it down, and give it to me to take to the sitting in a sealed envelope. I hoped that Peter would go to my house—which was six miles away—and bring me an account of what my maid had done to the room, which could be verified by my opening the envelope. This experiment was a total failure. Peter went off to my house obediently when we told him what was wanting, and for full three-quarters of an hour the traveler never moved. When at last he came back he was indignant, and asked how we could have given him all this trouble when there were no human eyes to see through. It was one of the experiences which fully convinced us that our own will, desire, and intention had little or nothing to do with the results obtained.

Our telepathic experiments with Peter had exactly the same results as those carried on between two living human beings. Peter is

evidently very receptive of thought, and usually requires a transmitter whose mind he can read.

After this circle had broken up and these first sittings had come to an end (Mr. L. left Dublin soon after), the Rev. S. H. and I were sure he and I should get blindfold experiments through. We were mistaken, however; for months we tried patiently evening after evening with no results whatever, blindfold or otherwise! We both seemed to have lost all power to do automatic work of any kind.

One evening about seven or eight months after Mr. L. had gone away, Mr. X. and another friend were at my house, and it occurred to me that we might try the ouija-board as a mild amusement. Mr. W. and I tried first, with little or no success; then Mr. X. sat with me, and the traveler flew about and spelt out messages in great style. Since then (four or five years ago) Mr. X. and I have sat constantly, and Peter has come to us and helped

us to get blindfold work through. The results were not so sure as those which came through with Mr. L., but Peter has done test work for us, telepathic experiments, etc. I find that in these experiments the particular sitter naturally makes an immense difference. If Mr. Y. is present at a sitting and he concentrates on a card, number, or letter, or even a word, the proportion of successful results is very large compared to those achieved through other sitters. Mr. Y. is not a sitter himself, but he has a very remarkable influence on a séance, and undoubtedly he has great power of conveying thought to controls. The mere fact that he has glanced at the word or number to be conveyed seems to make it clear to Peter.

Before I close this chapter perhaps I should say a few words about telepathy during hypnotic trance. Of this I have only slight experience, and I shall not go outside what has come under my personal notice. The Rev. S. H. is an expert hypnotist, and he has frequently

hypnotized Mr. X. and me and other friends of mine. We found that ouija-work, blindfold and otherwise, could be accomplished under these trance conditions, though the messages were spelt out slowly and nothing of special interest came through. Lately we had the following results in thought transference, etc., under hypnotism. The subjects were Mr. X. and myself, and I do not think we had got beyond an early stage of trance in any instance.

On one of these occasions the Rev. S. H. tried to convey "taste" to Mr. X. He did so in this way: Having got his subject into a sufficiently drowsy condition, which took about five minutes, the Rev. S. H. tasted first salt, then sugar, cayenne pepper, vinegar, and lastly ginger. In each case after tasting he took Mr. X.'s hand, and suggested that he was tasting something, and asked what it was. In every case but one Mr. X. recognized immediately what was in the Rev. S. H.'s mouth at the time, smacking his lips when the sugar's

turn came! The ginger was the only case not perfectly successful. Mr. X. thought it was cloves, but by that time the Rev. S. H. had tasted so many condiments that it might well have been difficult to catch the exact flavor of this last one!

At another sitting, the Rev. S. H., having hypnotized Mr. X. and me, tried the following experiments with us: He held any object picked up at random in the room in one hand, while with the other he took the hand of Mr. X., concentrated his own thought on the object, and asked what it was. The first object chosen was a fountain-pen. Mr. X. almost immediately described the object as "long, black, and thin," but couldn't say exactly what it was. The second chosen was a penny. Mr. X. described it as "rather small, flat, and round," but did not see anything further. The third, a roll of paper, was a complete failure; it produced no impression whatever.

Similar experiments were then tried with

myself as the subject. The first object attempted was a round crystal. I saw something round and luminous which seemed full of reflections, and which appeared to retreat from my eyes, become tiny, and then enlarge again. I could not say what it was. The second object was an ordinary briar-wood pipe. After a minute or two I knew that whatever it was it had two dark colors, was not luminous, and was oval in shape. I got no more than this. The pipe was dark-brown wood with a black mouth-piece, and had an oval bowl, which the Rev. S. H. held in his hand. I did not visualize the stem of the pipe, which his hand did not touch.

Further experiments done the same evening were as follows: While still hypnotized, Mr. X. and I were put sitting at the ouija-board, our hands on the traveler. When we touched it, it began, as usual, to move rapidly. The Rev. S. H. suggested forcibly that no control should come. He then concentrated his mind

on the word "butter," and very slowly and with much fumbling, I believe, the word was distinctly spelt out on the board.

The next experiment, in which the Rev. S. H. concentrated on one letter on the board, pointing to it with his finger while he held a hand of one or other sitter, failed with both of us. The Rev. S. H. suggested that it was very difficult to concentrate satisfactorily on a single letter when the whole alphabet was spread before him.

The last of these little experiments was that the Rev. S. H. held one of my hands, the other being on the traveler. My control, Shamar, spelt out her name. The Rev. S. H. asked her whether if he held an object under the table she could tell him what it was. She said she would try. He held a match-box underneath the table. The traveler moved over to the edge of the table where it was tilted over, touching it lightly, and slowly spelt out "paper." The Rev. S. H. said, "So far right, but describe it

further." Having had another look at it, Shamar spelt out "box" and then "match."

I describe these experiments as Mr. D., who was recording them at the time, took them down, as I myself was in a state of hypnotic sleep. From my own experience, I consider that no field of psychic study offers more interesting possibilities than telepathy, and especially so when practiced through automatism with the control. In some of the cases I mention no conclusion seemed possible, other than that an external and intelligent influence was at work in co-operation with us. In the case of these latter experiments we are, however, not dealing with a possible external entity but are face to face with the, as yet, almost unexplained possibilities and mysteries of the subconscious mind, whose abysmal depths afford a fascinating field for investigation to those who are not directly interested in the subject of survival after death.

CHAPTER V

"PREVISION"

HAD I not decided that this would be purely a record of my personal experiences, I should make an attempt to speak of "clairvoyance" in the full sense of the word, but my space is limited, and what may be called "prevision" is the only kind of clairvoyance with which I have come into touch and of which I have had first-hand evidence. Prevision is, I think, an inexplicable faculty, but it is a power which some persons undeniably possess, and, allowing that an external agent is at work, in automatic experiments one meets certain controls who also possess the marvelous quality of looking into the future.

I think, I may say I believe, that a living person, through what I can best describe as his "atmosphere," attracts or repels certain individuals as that atmosphere may be sympathetic or antipathetic to them, and thus the clairvoyant, who is supersensitive, may be enabled to reach farther than the average individual, and enter for the moment into the associations and memory of a person whose atmosphere is sympathetic to him. In the frequent instances in which a clairvoyant, perfectly successful with one person, fails totally with another, I think this is the explanation. An antipathetic atmosphere must make it almost impossible for the sensitive to grasp the past, present, and future of an individual psychically out of touch with him. One realizes this when one considers how apparently unreasonable one's likes and dislikes to certain people are, which I account for in the same way.

With regard to prevision, while it is com-

paratively easy to explain how the sensitive can describe past and present situations by saying that the subject may convey these impressions telepathically to the clairvoyant, in the case of prevision of future events no such explanation—so far as we are aware—can be offered. We may carry about with us the more important future events of our lives, and if so, we may be able to transmit them subconsciously to the sensitive. But who has had any proof of this? I am unable to entertain any doubt whatever that certain persons possess the power of prevision, more especially when they attempt to foretell the future to a really sympathetic subject. I have had some amazing instances of this in my own experience. If free-will has no existence at all, and if events are predetermined from birth to death, it is conceivable that we carry the future as well as the past and present with us; but allowing that we are in any way agents in determining our own fate, how does the clairvoyant foretell our des-

tiny, which is as yet undetermined? Of course, when we use the term "prevision" we must bear in mind that there are many degrees of that power. In some cases only a glimpse of the future a very short way ahead is permitted, and in cases of this kind the view is very narrow and restricted; the clairvoyant gets on one line, as it were, and sees nothing beyond or beside it. On the other hand, in my own experience, I have had my past and present pictured most accurately and my future for four years ahead, and this reading included the most unlikely and important events. A point which is interesting is that, unless in exceptional cases, the "fortune-teller" seldom foresees great public events, such as the War. This, again, substantiates my contention that the personal atmosphere is the window by which the clairvoyant is permitted to gaze into the future.

To illustrate what I speak of I shall give three cases of prevision or prophecy, all of

which concerned myself, and which demonstrate three entirely different degrees of this power. The first of these "readings of the future" was a most remarkable one. Mrs. S., the lady I mentioned before in connection with my letter to Miss C., was the sensitive. I visited this lady in June, 1914. She knew nothing whatever about me, not even my name, and she did not even recognize the fact that I am Irish by birth. She persisted that I was American! Mrs. S. did not focus her clairvoyant power by cards, crystal, or any of the usual methods, nor did she look at my hand or even hold it. She merely sat opposite me and told me the most astonishing things! She recognized immediately that I had done psychic work, and said that fact helped her. She described my past for fifteen years back, my present position, and the future for four years ahead, a prediction which seemed so preposterous that, though I took down what she said, I could not let such improbabilities weigh on my

mind. And yet she made no mistake in any particular.

The circumstances were as follows: In December, 1913, we had moved into a new house, and spent a great deal on fitting it up, etc. As my husband was a physician, practicing in Dublin, he and I considered we had settled down for practically the rest of our lives there. Mrs. S. prophesied that two years after I saw her I should leave this house, and that my husband would go away from me. She could not tell why, but he would "drop out of my life," she said. "Yet he would not die." All she prophesied has come true, and the War—which she did not foresee—accounts for what has occurred.

The next case I shall mention here was one of an entirely different nature.

Miss M. has remarkable mediumistic power in many different directions; she can do psychometry, has a great sense of the influence of

locality, and is decidedly clairvoyant, though in a different manner from Mrs. S.

In October, 1916, Miss M. looked into a crystal for me, and described a scene which she thought was symbolic. She saw a tent in a desert-place—wild, dark figures crouching round, and told me this scene meant that someone very dear to me was in the tent and would be in great danger from these wild, dark people. I could not place what she saw. My son was in India at the time, but his regiment had no prospect of active service, and I did not connect him with the scene in the crystal. In January and February, 1917, however, a disturbance on the Afghan frontier broke out, and my son's regiment was ordered off to a desert region, where there was severe skirmishing for some time. What called my attention to the crystal scene was a letter written by him while in this desert-place, in which he described his tent and the district in which he was in a way which immediately recalled the

crystal picture to my mind. Now, I give this case as an entire contrast to the power of precognition possessed by Mrs. S. She saw the future for years ahead for me most accurately; while in Miss M.'s case only one small event was pictured, though this one scene was very vivid and distinct. I have found Miss M.'s power for reading future events follows on one line at a time. She gets a glimpse of the future, and a very accurate one; but once an incident seizes her, she will get it again and again, and nothing else.

The last instance of prevision I shall give was a very striking one, and of a very different nature from those I have already spoken of.

Mrs. M., a remarkable trance medium, not professional, came to my house once or twice for séances. On one of these occasions the circle present sat round a table, holding hands, until Mrs. M. dropped the hands she was holding (she was not under control, apparently) stared at me, and said: "I see a tall lily stand-

ing in front of you. Someone near and dear to you is going to die." I said: "You may be mistaken; it may be myself." Mrs. M. said: "No; it is someone very near to you, perhaps your father or mother. It is close; the lily is bowing towards you. It will be in a very short time and sudden." I attached very little importance to this incident, being of a skeptical turn of mind. That day month, however, my father died very suddenly. Now, this was a very clear and distinct case of prevision, as it happened that this was not in my subconscious mind; there was no indication that my father was especially ill until within half an hour of his death.

So much for clairvoyance from the sensitive. I now venture to speak of a much more difficult matter—clairvoyance and prevision in connection with the control as it occurs in automatism. Here the question arises, From what source does this power come? If we allow the agency of an external influence or control,

is the control clairvoyant? Or if we discard the possibility of any external influence, how can the phenomena be accounted for? Does the sitter become clairvoyant under abnormal conditions while using the autoscope?

I cannot reply to any of these questions with any confidence, but as I have said before that, from my personal experiments, I am inclined to believe that there is an external influence at work, I am still further inclined to believe that in the case of some controls (as in the case of living human beings) we meet one occasionally who has the power of reading future events. But I feel it would be most presumptuous in anyone with my limited experience to attempt more than the putting of the slight evidence I possess before my readers.

The first cases I had of prevision through the ouija-board concerned the very sudden death of my father in April, 1913, of which I have just spoken. Looking up old records of sittings which took place in the winter of 1912

and the early months of 1913, I find that three or four near relatives who had passed over came repeatedly, and in every case gave the same message: that my father was much more seriously ill than the doctors supposed, and that he would die suddenly of angina. These little messages were depressing, certainly; but, though my father had been suffering from insomnia and was not in good health, there was nothing to indicate heart trouble, and we attached no importance to them. And yet they proved to be perfectly correct. There was nothing especially evidential, so far as I remember, as to these relatives being the persons they professed to be. In this case I do not consider, however, their identity was a question of much importance. The point that is interesting is whether some external influence, possessed of clairvoyant power, conveyed a very clear and direct prophecy to me—a prophecy the details of which were certainly not in my subconscious mind—or whether a latent

prophetical power was developed in myself under abnormal conditions.

Another case of prevision from the ouija-board was the following: In August, 1916, I was in a very remote part of County Kerry. One afternoon I received letters from Dublin concerning the sale of my house, which I was trying to dispose of under rather hopeless conditions at the time. These letters decided me to hurry up to Dublin next morning, and that evening, before going to bed, Miss C. and I had a little sitting. Astor, Miss C.'s control, whom I have mentioned before as having prophetical powers, came and told me that I was right to travel up to town, that the arrangement I hoped to make about the sale of my house would not come off, but that within a week I should find a new purchaser and dispose of the house to far better advantage. This seemed a most improbable forecast of future events at the moment, as I had spent some months in fruitless efforts to get rid of the

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house, and everything was against me in August, when few people were in town. Astor, however, was right. The arrangement I expected to complete failed, and quite unexpectedly a new and better purchaser appeared within the week, and the bargain was concluded.

Astor has prophesied most stirring events lately for Miss C. and me, and so far, five of these predictions have come true. A year ago Astor was most persistent about a play in which Miss C. was much interested, and which he said would be performed in London. This seemed more than improbable at the time (Astor says he is unable to calculate, within a year or so, when an event will occur, and could not tell us when we should hear about the production), and now in the most unexpected way this play has been "put on" in London.

I leave it to my readers to suggest an explanation of these cases of prevision through automatism. Is Astor clairvoyant? Or if

Astor is merely Miss C.'s subconsciousness, do she and I become clairvoyant under abnormal conditions? Or shall we put these readings of future events down to coincidence? I do not venture to make any definite reply to these questions.

The instances of prevision which I have given in this chapter may seem trivial to the reader, but I make no apology for them. They may not be striking, but they go with all the other evidence we heap together to help to convince the world that if progress is to be made in the study of the Unseen, it must be slow to reject what seem improbabilities at a first glance.

The most useful work the student of psychical research can do is to accumulate results good or bad; no sitting, however trivial, should go unrecorded. When possible, no case which might prove identity should remain uninvestigated. No psychic phenomena, however improbable, such as chiromancy, etc., should be

despised. The smaller and rather tiresome experiments in telepathy should not be neglected. It is by the sifting of mountains of such evidence that we advance towards a clearer understanding of what is now called the "supernatural," but what may some day be considered "natural" if we continue our work with patience.

CHAPTER VI

Mediumship and the Mental Sensations of the Medium

IN the four preceding chapters I have tried to record and classify some of the most interesting experiences which have come to me personally through automatism, the only method by which I have endeavored to hold communication with the Unknown. These are records of some six or seven years' work, which was never strenuous and always intermittent, and that for many reasons, one being that, although psychical research has offered me many fascinating problems and has given me many delightful friends, it is not my chief interest in life. Indeed, I will go further, and say I am glad it has never absorbed me.

This may seem discouraging to the enthusiast but I make the statement advisedly, partly because I believe that, for the average sensitive, good results can only be obtained by great moderation in the expenditure of psychic power. Evil results follow almost invariably on too constant sittings. I am entirely convinced that, in practicing any artificial branch of psychic study or in the cultivation of mediumistic power, great and incalculable dangers are run: an exhausted sensitive is practically useless for experimental work, and may lose his or her power completely, in addition to seriously impairing his or her health.

When I speak of "artificial" branches of psychic work, I mean that work which is produced by a deliberate attempt to obtain results—séances or sittings of any kind, table-turning, etc. A "natural" sensitive comes under a different heading. When this gift appears early in life its exercise cannot be avoided. Results come to the medium; the

medium does not seek them, and probably in these cases they are not injurious, and certainly they are inevitable.

The "cultivated" medium who has limited gifts and who wishes to strengthen these gifts should be content with the limitations set on the work he can do, and should not attempt to force them in any way. He should never "sit" when he is ill or tired, and in his best condition he should deliberately make up his mind that this subject is not going to absorb him.

In this way more satisfactory work can be done. When I reflect how irregular our own sittings have been, and that we have never ventured on more than two in a week, I am fairly well satisfied with the modest results we have achieved, and I am quite convinced that these results would not have been achieved had we worked our small fund of psychic power more strenuously than we did. If all circles

would be content to work patiently and slowly, not to become possessed by this one topic, and not to expect anything sensational, I believe the mass of evidence thus accumulated would throw more light on the study of the Unseen than they realize. In the formation of small circles many matters have to be considered, the chief one being a combination of really suitable sitters. At the ouija-board, where two persons work together, it is all-important to discover mediums whose respective qualities balance and assist each other. The control will generally say he requires "a negative and a positive." What this means exactly it is hard to understand, but from watching many combinations at the ouija-board I have gathered that a "positive" medium receives the message through his or her brain and transmits it to the board, while a negative possesses the driving force—I mean that, apparently, one sitter supplies mental, and the other muscular power.

Force is necessary, and the sitter whose brain and eyes are used does not seem to supply as much force as the negative, whose senses are less suited to serve the control. In arranging a circle for automatism, two sitters should be chosen who possess respectively the qualities I mention as far as can be discovered. A quick, intelligent recorder should be the third element. Great care, accuracy, and rapidity are necessary to read the ouija-board, and this office should be taken entirely off the sitters' shoulders. They should be in a quiet and relaxed state of mind—in fact, the less they realize what is taking place the better.

The gift of "seeing without eyes" is certainly comparatively rare. I have sought diligently for mediums who possess the power of working blindfold, and find they are few in number. In fact, I have only met four out of the many I have tried who have this gift. I generally distinguish a blindfold worker by the fact that before he has had any suggestion that

we should close our eyes he will close his of his own accord, and prefer to sit without looking at the letters. Blindfold sitting is very exhausting as a rule; I find it so especially when the control or communicator works chiefly through me, as it invariably does when my fellow-sitter is a beginner. Here I should like to refer to the mental state of the sitter for automatic experiments, for it is difficult for persons who have not been sitters themselves to judge how far the psychic is in a normal condition when practicing automatism.

The crux in deciding whether or not an external influence is at work consists in determining how far the subliminal self plays a part in these experiments. No one present is in a more difficult position to judge of this than the automatist himself. When at the board I am not conscious that my condition is other than normal, but if I were asked whether or not I used my hand to push the traveler to certain letters I should be quite unable to reply. If

I do this, it is an entirely subconscious action on my part. What I can state confidently is, that after a short time messages come through my brain before they are written down, and I am again unable to say whether they are suggestions from an external entity or not. I am inclined to believe they are. For sometimes sentences come through which are quite contrary to what I should expect, and again, when I am most desirous that the traveler should move for me, it stands stock-still.

I am absolutely certain that the sitters' condition is abnormal once the control or communicator takes possession of the arm. In the case of Mr. X., he closes his eyes and turns involuntarily away from the board, and often, after a few minutes, gets into a state of half trance. He appears to become seized by the emotions of the control in communication; grief, anger, etc., overcome him, and if the emotion is intense he becomes hypnotized and is unable to continue the sitting. A point

which is very marked in ouija-board work is the obedience and caution of the influences that speak. It is quite easy, as a rule, to get rid of an unpleasant entity; it is easy also to call up any special person, though I have a great objection to doing this, as it seems to leave the field open for fraud and impersonation. If a dangerous or unpleasant subject is spoken of, it quite amusing to observe the prudence and tact displayed by the control. It rather points to the subconscious theory. Only once in all my experience have I known a control make a really untactful remark.

An interesting point I have noticed in automatism, as practiced by two mediums working jointly at the ouija-board, is the transference of force from one to the other according to the nature of the control or communicator. For instance, in the case of Peter and Eyen the force seems to come chiefly from me. With Astor (who professes to be her spirit guide) Miss C.'s hand is powerfully controlled,

and I appear to add practically nothing to the force which moves the traveler from letter to letter. In the case of Sir Hugh Lane, Mr. Lennox Robinson's hand and arm are literally seized and pushed about so forcibly that it is most difficult to read the communications which come through. The traveler has more than once been flung off the board in a violent way with this communicator.

Those who are inclined to dismiss what we psychical students have to tell as foolish and unconvincing should always bear in mind the difficulties we labor under. The evidence of survival laid before the public is at best only a small fraction of what we possess. From the very private and intimate nature of most of the messages we receive it is impossible that the really convincing part of our work can be exposed to the public gaze. Personal feeling constantly stands in our way. We may be quite positive ourselves that we have spoken to those we loved who have passed out of our

lives, and yet a seal may be set on our mouths and we dare not say the word which would silence the skeptic.

I have already said that the messages received from the Unknown, so far as I have had any knowledge of them, are essentially personal messages. The control, and still more the communicator, appear to be out of touch with the earth, except so far as they enter into the "aura" of some living human being. The only instance I can recall of a message concerning a public event coming directly to my circle was a very vivid and perfectly correct prophecy concerning the Balkan War which was sent to us by Peter through a communicator who called himself "David Isaac Solomons," during our first blindfold sittings on October 19th, 1912. It ran as follows: "Blood, blood, everywhere in the Near East. A great nation will fall and a small nation will rise. Blood everywhere. A great religion will stand in danger. News that will astonish the

civilized world will come to hand within the next week."

A week after this message came the first Bulgarian victory—Kirk Kilisse—was announced, and later Turkey fell and Bulgaria rose.

I do not consider the news of the sinking of the *Titanic* an instance of information of a public event through a communicator, as I believe that case to have been telepathic, and in the *Lusitania* case a personal interest was involved.

Before closing this chapter I have only a few remarks to make. One of these is on the value of practical experiment.

I urge anyone interested in this subject to try his own powers as a medium. Until practical experiments are attempted, no fair estimate of the subject can be arrived at. Many admirable books have been written concerning every branch of psychical study, but the reader of these who has never been at a séance or

used an autoscope has, with all respect to him, no notion of what he is talking of. As I have said, much that cannot be explained to the public is what is most convincing to the student, and I say further, there is much of what is convincing to the medium that cannot be explained to the student. If possible, sit yourself, with the precaution necessary; analyze your feelings, and try to do so with a clear and open mind, not starting with any prejudice, religious or otherwise.

The personal element is really the chief element in psychic matters. Messages received through the autoscope are usually personal. Hence the great difficulty in handing them over in their entirety for public dissection. Personality counts in sittings more than anything else. One uncongenial person can upset a whole evening. A cold or unsympathetic individual, an ultra-skeptical or contemptuous person, is detected at once from the other side,

and can reduce the results of a sitting to mere nonsense.

Again, a sitter who is even slightly ailing retards results. The controls talk of nothing else when this happens; physical conditions seem to count even more than mental ones. What is strange and entertaining to the observer is that the personal element tells as much on this side as on the other. I have often watched, with infinite amusement, how someone contemptuous or indifferent to a distressing degree becomes keen and vivid when some element concerning his own personality enters into the message! Something said by a friend of his own, or relative, or, better still, a visit from his own "spirit guide," who, no matter what nonsense he talks, can rouse and excite him. In fact, one of the interests one finds in psychical work is that it not only reveals the personalities of controls and communicators, but also human personalities. For nothing calls human emotions into play more vividly than

this converse with the Unknown! Pleasure, anger, grief, joy, vanity, common sense, curiosity, and wonder, all appear at the ouija-board, both in sitters and spectators.

I trust that what I have said in this chapter may serve the purpose which I have intended it should—that is, that it may help the really earnest student to approach these investigations in a sane and inquiring spirit, without prejudice, and realizing that great patience and perseverance are required if even a few grains of gold are to be found among the mountains of dross.

CHAPTER VII

Psychometry Through the Medium and the Control

PSYCHOMETRY is a term which may possibly be unfamiliar to some of my readers. I define it for their benefit, therefore, as "a psychic power possessed by certain individuals which enables them to divine the history of, or events connected with, a material object with which they come in close contact."

Incredible as the fact may appear, nevertheless the evidence that this power exists is most remarkable and difficult to explain away. The cases of psychometry which I describe in this chapter have all come under my personal

notice; I have no gift of the kind myself, but I have endeavored to observe what has come before me carefully, and to note anything of special interest. I think persons who possess the gift of psychometry are not necessarily sensitive to locality, as one might suppose. I mean that it would seem natural that a person who could read the history of an object by touching it could also "sense" a place in which anything striking had happened. So far as I have known them, the psychometrists are not by any means influenced by locality. Their power manifests itself chiefly by physical contact with a material object.

The first case I shall mention is one which, though not specially striking, had one feature which interested me greatly. Mr. and Mrs. M. were at my house one evening at a séance. Mrs. M. has remarkable powers as a trance medium. She is not a professional. Mr. M. mentioned to me casually soon after he arrived that he had found he had power as a

psychometrist, and was trying to cultivate this gift; he asked me to give him something to hold which I wore constantly. I gave him a pearl ear-ring I had on, and he held it in his hand during the séance. Late in the evening, when I had forgotten all about it, Mr. M. reminded me of this ear-ring, and said he had received many impressions from it. He told me many things about myself, all of which were quite correct and most detailed. He described my father most accurately—his appearance, clothes, occupation, and the house he lived in. Then he came to a tale about myself which concerned a man in India. I knew nothing of this, and told him he was wrong. Mr. M. seemed very clear about it, and said I should remember it later, he was sure. I told my sister of this, and at first she failed to place the incident, but a few days after she said to me: "Mr. M. was quite right, after all; I have been thinking about it. The ear-ring was mine first; I gave it to you, and the story of

the man in India concerned me." And she reminded me of the circumstances which Mr. M. had made no mistake about—even to the detail of a pet dog possessed by the man in question, which my sister verified.

The interesting point here was that telepathy from me could not explain the fact, and also that the ear-ring should have retained part of the history of the person it first belonged to. This reading made by Mr. M. contained, like most of the readings of psychometrists and clairvoyants, scraps of this and that. Everything in the case was perfectly correct, but the mental pictures came, as they always do, like cinema pictures—no sooner there than gone, and an entirely different scene revealed—and one of these moving pictures illustrated a scrap of my sister's life. Hence the puzzle it presented to me.

Another and even more interesting case of psychometry occurred with my friend Miss C.

In June, 1914, a lady in London, Mrs. S., did

a most remarkable reading of the present and future for me, of which I have spoken already. This lady appeared to get in touch with me in a most complete and rapid manner; she recognized at once that I had some power as a medium, and seemed to find that fact helpful to her.

In May, 1916, Miss C. was in London, and visited the same lady, hoping for a good result in clairvoyance. When starting for Mrs. S.'s house, Miss C. received a letter from me, and, not having time to read it, carried it with her in her hand. Mrs. S. was not very successful with Miss C., and, having made a few not very interesting remarks, she suddenly said: "You have a letter in your hand from someone whose name begins with H.; give it to me." Miss C. handed Mrs. S. my letter, and, having held it to her forehead for a moment, she proceeded to pour out my history to Miss C., past, present, and future, and this, as events showed, with perfect accuracy in every detail.

Now, Mrs. S. had only seen me once two years before, and did not then even know my name, and she had never seen Miss C. and me together, so that so far as she knew—even allowing that she remembered me—she could not have associated us with each other in any way. I consider this the most notable case of psychometry I have come across. The fact that Mrs. S. detected my letter in Miss C.'s hand, gave the initial letter of my name, and then, by some supernormal faculty, holding the writing in her hand, gathered a long and most complicated story from it, was, to my thinking, astounding.

Another case of a different nature, perhaps almost as remarkable as the last, came through Miss M., a personal friend of my own, who is gifted with telepathic and clairvoyant power and can psychometrize in a most remarkable way. In December, 1917, I was at a friend's house one afternoon, and met Miss M. there. My friend had brought a parcel with her from

the country, containing a stone, a piece of mortar, a piece of charred wood, and a fragment of molding from the outside wall of a building.

Miss M. took up these objects one by one, and, selecting the piece of molding, held it in her hand for a considerable time. She began by saying she saw a "place" in the country where it seemed dark—figures were moving about. She noticed one man particularly. He wore rough clothes, was not a peasant, and not a gentleman! She felt there was treachery about him. The "place" had a history; something had happened there more than once. There were outhouses behind the place, and she saw animals being driven hastily out of them. She saw a fire smoldering there; it had been a great fire. She saw a woman in the place and a man, whom she thought was her husband. The woman had far the stronger personality of the two.

Now, the house in question had been burnt

down three times. The fires had taken place at night, and it had never been discovered how these had occurred. The cattle had been driven out of the barns on the last occasion by some unknown person. The owners of the house were as Miss M. described them. The woman had a far stronger personality than her husband. I need hardly add that Miss M. knew nothing of any of these circumstances—neither where the house was nor that a house was in question, unless she guessed the fact from the piece of molding.

This reading was very wonderful, I thought, and what puzzled me most was why the piece of molding carried this history with it when the stone, mortar, and wood told no tale! Possibly this was because the molding was a more essential part of the building. Psychometry is a complete mystery to me. I cannot form any satisfactory theory as to why an inanimate object should stimulate clairvoyant power as I have described.

I have seen far more psychometry coming through the control than through the medium. I mean that in the course of recent sittings we have had a large group of cases in which various objects were laid on the ouija-table and psychometry was obtained through the help of Shamar or Astor, when no human being was present who possessed psychometric power even in a slight degree. These experiments have been made lately, but so far we have not tried any case in which no one in the room knew anything about the object placed on the table; so possibly I am wrong in classing the larger number of them under the head of psychometry: they may come more fittingly under the head of telepathy. However, as they all consist in elucidating the history of an object apparently through contact with the traveler, I add them to this chapter.

In the cases I now quote various objects were laid on the ouija board. My guide, Shamar, purported to give us their history by

touching them—i.e., the traveler touched the object from time to time, sometimes violently, nearly knocking it off the table—and once when her own knowledge failed her by bringing some other entity better qualified to speak on the subject than herself. In one case, perhaps the most interesting of the group, Miss C. was one of the sitters, and the psychometry came through her guide, Astor, who seemed quite as proficient as Shamar in psychometric power.

I give several of these cases in the order in which they came, but it is impossible to embody the entire script of each in the small space I have at my disposal.

1. *Fountain Pen: Sitters, Mrs. Travers Smith and Mr. B.*

In the first case we tried in this way: an ordinary fountain-pen was placed on the table;

it belonged to the Rev. S. H., who was present. (He was not sitting.) Having examined it carefully, Shamar told us that it had belonged to someone else before it came to its present owner; the man who first possessed it was dead; it had not been left to the Rev. S. H., but given to him by a woman connected with the dead man. Shamar described this man as a hard-headed business person.

All these details were correct; it was the first and least remarkable case we tried, but it was interesting, as the object was quite an ordinary fountain-pen, which could suggest nothing to the sitters.

2. Opal Set in Silver: Sitters, Mrs. Travers Smith and Mr. B.

In the second case I quote a jewel was put on the table, an opal of a peculiarly pale color set in a curious way. Shamar gave us the his-

tory of this stone from the time it was found in a quarry in China; she described many persons who had possessed the stone, and how it had passed from hand to hand chiefly because its psychic properties brought misfortune to those who wore it. She told us of many forms in which it had been set; that it had belonged to a French Prince whose initial was L.; that he had been killed by some man deliberately; that after his death it had passed into the hands of a woman, who possessed it for a very short time, and that she also met a violent death. Her initials were M. A.

Now, the owner of the ring was sitting, and he could verify several of the facts mentioned by Shamar—among them that the stone had belonged to Louis XVIth just before his execution; that he had had it conveyed to Marie Antoinette, in whose possession it had remained until her execution.

3. *Ruby Ring: Sitters, Mrs. Travers Smith and Mr. B.*

In the third case a very fine sixteenth-century ring, set with a large and beautifully cut ruby, was on the board. Shamar gave us a good deal of its history herself, and when her own knowledge failed her, she brought us a priest named Shamouni, a Zoroastrian who had worn the stone in former times. He told us he was the head of some Eastern occult order, and had had the power (when alive) of leaving the body; he said the ruby was full of magic, and had helped him to do this. He gave us information about the Zoroastrian religion which was unknown to us, but which we have verified as being quite correct; he told us that when the ruby was in his possession it was not cut as it is at present. He explained some of the symbols that are on it, and described another which he said was in the place which is

now engraved with a fine head of Jupiter (obviously of Western workmanship). We inquired carefully about this symbol (the priest traced it for us on the board with the traveler). We have succeeded in drawing it, and it proves to be the sign of Leo. After this Shamar came again, and continued the history of the ring. She described it as having been presented to one of the Popes by some religious order in Rome, and it was handed down from one Pope to another. The owner of the ring was in the room, but not sitting; he believed the stone had belonged to the head of some occult order in the East, and he had also been told it had been in the possession of several of the Popes. Shamar gave the date of the present setting quite correctly; also the nature of the stone, which was not an ordinary ruby; the communication was very long and detailed.

4. *Cross: Sitters, Mrs. Travers Smith and Mr. B.*

The next case I mention is an interesting one. A cross was the object in question. It suggested little in the rather dim light we have at our sittings, except that it was embossed and made of some white metal. Shamar stated that it was made in Italy, the metal being a mixture of bronze and silver. It then came to France, and was sold to a woman who always wore it as a "kind of amulet." She described this woman as beautiful, and a Princess or noble person. She stated that this woman had brought the cross with her to England; that there she had been unhappy, and had met her death suddenly. She was killed by a "knife," and had no time to prepare her soul for its journey to the other world, as she only knew she was to die a few hours beforehand. The owner of the cross was present. He knew it

was said to have belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots; it was a reliquary made of some white metal (not pure silver) enameled. Strangely enough, the word "Scotland" was in my mind during the whole sitting, though I did not associate the object with Mary, Queen of Scots—in fact, her name never occurred to me. The word "Scotland," however, was never spelt out on the board, which tells against the subconscious theory.

5. *Piece of Alabaster: Sitters, Miss C. and Mr. B.*

In this case a piece of alabaster was on the table. It conveyed no suggestion to the sitters further than a rather large egg-shaped pebble would—in fact, no one present recognized it as alabaster. The object belonged to the Rev. S. H., who was in the room; the sitters were

Miss C. and Mr. B. The control in this case was Astor. A very long communication came through, in which it appeared that the object had come from the Pyramids, which were described with many details unknown to the sitters; the tombs in the desert and the funeral rites of Ancient Egypt were also described most rapidly and in very excellent English. The whole communication presented a picture of Ancient Egypt quite remarkable in its vividness. It was only at the conclusion of the sitting that the owner told us that the piece of alabaster had been brought to him from one of the Pyramids.

6. *Silver or Steel Ring with Coat of Arms Engraved on it: Sitters, Mrs. Travers Smith and Mr. A.*

A beautifully chased ring was laid on the board. The metal from which it was made

appeared to be steel or silver; a coat of arms was engraved on it, but that conveyed no idea to me. Shamar was the control. She said the ring was made in Italy, and brought from that country to France. It was sold to a man of high degree, a nobleman, she thought. She described him as being closely connected with the French Court. She saw him wearing scarlet robes and a closely fitting scarlet cap; she said that he was cunning and full of guile, not so much through his own efforts as through a woman's assistance; he was Italian by birth. Mr. B., who had just bought the ring, was in the room; he did not know its history, but the coat of arms was that of the Medici family, and he thought the psychometry clearly pointed to the ring having possibly belonged to Cardinal Mazarin, though this had not been told him when purchasing it.

7. Large Gold Ring, Finely Chased: Sitters, Miss C. and Mr. B.

Astor said: "This was worn by a person of rank with a dark face. He was very proud and stood upon his dignity. He was involved in many intrigues of a somewhat mean and despicable nature. He was crafty and full of guile. He trapped some innocent people and led them to ruin, I think. (What was his nationality?) I would not like to say, but it was once in Spain; I think it was not there long. It was given to a woman as the price of her beauty, and that was not the end. (What country did the man belong to?) France, perhaps, but I think the man had Southern blood. (What was his name?) He was a man engaged governing people despotically. He was tyrannical by nature, and he oppressed the weak and caused great suffering. I think he was not long-lived, because he seems

not to have died naturally. He was in some great trouble or difficulty, and that affected his health. He did not die in the natural way from age. (What country did he die in?) It was not in France, I am sure. I think he was on a bare spot in close proximity to the sea. He might have been a soldier. He might have been a—— I have got a name. I think it is Napoleon. (Why did you not get his name at once?) I can only get slowly into the atmosphere."

The ring was Napoleon's coronation ring.

A locket containing Napoleon's hair was now placed on the table. Astor said: "This was not so close to him, I imagine. He was not so close to it, because I cannot get his atmosphere from it." The locket was modern, and the traveler did not come into contact with the hair which was enclosed in it.

I have related these cases for what they are worth. In each of them the owner of the object psychometrized was present, and knew

more or less of its history. I acted as medium and Shamar as control in all but two instances—that of the piece of alabaster from the Pyramids and in the case of Napoleon's coronation ring, when Miss C. was the medium and Astor the control.

This kind of work may quite reasonably be described as "telepathy." I have not come across any case of psychometry yet through medium or control where no one was present who knew anything of the object psychometrized; but even allowing that these cases were due to thought transference, I think they are sufficiently interesting and remarkable to be recorded here.

CHAPTER VIII

Summing Up

IN this, the last chapter of my book, I have set myself a difficult task. I shall make an attempt to sum up and lay before my readers whatever evidence I have received for and against the presence of an external influence working through us as we sit at the ouija-board. I limit myself strictly to my own line of research: I do not propose to go outside my personal experiences. What makes any definite pronouncement on this subject almost impossible is that, no matter what theory one holds, it is difficult to adhere to it rigidly, for the simple reason that, although the results of nine sittings might be accounted for by our

subliminal self or telepathy, at the tenth sitting something may occur which upsets and puzzles us and leads us to believe that, after all, something supernormal has got possession of us. It must always be borne in mind that I write as a sitter, not as an observer, therefore I am in a position to speak of the personal sensations of the medium. It seems simplest to take my chapters in the order I have written them, and give my conclusions on each separate subject. First as to the nature of what calls itself "the control."

The control, as I have explained it in my second chapter, is exactly of the nature of an intimate acquaintance; the word "familiar" expresses it admirably. We say, "Oh, here is Peter or Astor or Shamar," and we know the kind of communication we may expect, and we are never disappointed. Peter, Astor, and Shamar have always the same personalities, and we can count on the communicators each will call up for us.

Shall we decide, then, that once having determined the characteristics of a control, our subconsciousness supplies the rest? We have had a certain suggestion made to us, and our subliminal self sets to work, spins web after web for us; each web is woven on the same plan. We call our webs Astor or Eyen or Peter, but Astor, Eyen, and Peter are three suggestions which have been offered to our minds, and proceed to spin Astor's pattern or Eyen's or Peter's as any of the three names is spelt on the board.

But now comes the question, From what did the original suggestion arise? Where did these names come from, and the histories attached to them? Had the circle been chatting about the East when Shamar appeared and described herself as a Hindoo? Had the conversation turned on America when Peter Rooney introduced himself? I can say confidently, "No." I have no clue as to the origin of these influences. I cannot account for them. They

are so vivid to me that I feel as if I could describe their appearances and manners; the courtly, slippery Eyen, the rough and practical Peter, the dignified and simple Shamar, the fiery and headlong Astor, with his arrogant prophecies. The manner in which the arm is controlled in each case is quite different. Shamar and Eyen are smooth and easy, though the motion in each case feels different to the sitter; Peter is violent and erratic; Astor is amazingly rapid, and seizes the arm in a very powerful way. They quite remind one of the personages in Schumann's "Carnival," which he explains as his different moods; Florestan, Eusebius, etc.

The human mind has been described as a rock of which three-fourths is submerged in water; the fourth part, which is not submerged, is the conscious mind. It is a dangerous matter to pronounce on the powers of the submerged three-fourths of ourselves, of which we know little or nothing; we may be

capable under certain semi-hypnotic conditions of much that we are totally unconscious of in our normal state. I consciously find it hard to believe that I, who have made no special study of India or Persia, could spin out long tales about the East without stop or hesitation, putting ideas and sentences together at a rate which makes it difficult to take down the communication unless in shorthand; but my submerged portion may possibly be able to do this. I feel that I have, as I said before, no explanation to offer as to where the original suggestions of these controls came from; no positive proof of their origin can be obtained, I think, and it seems simplest to accept their own account of themselves and pass on to their work which they help us to accomplish.

In my third chapter I summed up as far as possible the evidence I have of survival. In the case of the communicator, proof of the presence of an external influence seems to me stronger than in the case of the control. The

control is very remote; he is vague and unsatisfactory in his statements; nothing can be proved about him; we have to take him more or less on faith; whereas the communicator has frequently made statements which have been a mixture of fact and fiction, and occasionally has stated facts only, without any fiction, as in the case of "Alice Franks" and the "Pearl Tie-pin" case. The only two explanations possible in cases such as these are—(*a*) That we are in actual communication, directly or indirectly, with a person who has passed through the experience which we call death; or (*b*) that in some mysterious and inexplicable way we have read the minds of persons who are not in touch with us in any way, and *that* for no reason which we can understand. I mean the minds of the living friends or relatives of the dead person.

This explanation appears to me more marvelous than the first, which many of us are inclined to reject because it involves belief in

what we call the "unreal." After all, if we admit that three-fourths of our mentality is submerged and that one-fourth only constitutes our consciousness, are we qualified to pronounce on what is "real" and what is "unreal"? Possibly we see these words in an inverted way; the large reality may be outside us; at most we may only be permitted to grasp an atom of it while we are here on earth—in other words, our consciousness may be less able to grasp reality than our subconsciousness.

I am not by any means convinced, but I am inclined to believe that under certain unexplained conditions we are enabled to communicate with the dead. I think we have had, through the reports of the S.P.R., indisputable proof of premonitions of death in the form of visions of persons, immediately before or after they have passed over. In the same way, through the ouija-board, the intense emotion awakened by the act of dying seems to give the spirit the power to communicate the fact of

his or her death by means of the sensitive or medium. The term "telepathy" may explain these cases, and also cases of appearances and communications long after death; but in instances such as the "Pearl Tie-pin" case, in which the communication came through a month or six weeks after the death had occurred, "telepathy" is a natural explanation, but we must admit that this is telepathy between a living mind and a discarnate spirit.

With regard to "prevision" through the ouija-board, so far as I have come across instances of this, it seems to me likely that an external influence is at work; I make this statement chiefly because of the extreme improbability of some of the predictions I have come across, many of which proved true, and which have made me smile when the messages were received. If prevision is not explained as the work of an external influence, we must attribute it to an awakening of latent clairvoyant power in our subconsciousness under the semi-

hypnosis produced by automatism. This is a perfectly rational explanation, and one which I am inclined to accept, but it does not quite solve the problem. Take a person gifted with clairvoyance in any form, and consider how difficult it is to account for this power of looking into the past or future. From careful observation I believe that no clairvoyant vision comes except in a state of semi-hypnosis; the mind must be quite lax and ready to receive the impression. I am inclined to think that these impressions come from some source external to the medium, who may have the past and present in his or her subconsciousness, but so far as we know cannot have the future. No psychic subject is more difficult than that of prevision, and I merely mention what seems to me the simplest and most probable explanation. Prevision through a medium who does not possess that power in his or her normal state, coming by means of automatism, is a puzzle which I do not venture to solve.

The psychometry of objects through the ouija-board affords some evidence of the presence of an external entity. In many of our experiments we have had persons in the room who knew certain facts about the object psychometrized; these cases can reasonably be called simple cases of telepathy, but I maintain that the telepathic powers of the sitters must be considerably heightened when sitting; in my normal state I could not possibly produce the results we obtained.

In a few instances we have psychometrized letters or objects, the contents and histories of which were unknown to anyone in the room. An interesting case was a letter written by Miss V. to a friend of mine. The letter was psychometrized. The control (Shamar) described rather peculiar circumstances connected with two ladies concerned, and also gave a very detailed description of Miss X.'s room, furniture, pictures, and view from the windows, etc.—all quite correct. No one at the

sitting knew anything about the room in question. It seemed clear that some external entity calling itself Shamar was responsible for this.

Automatic psychometry affords more proof that we are being handled by something outside ourselves than any other branch of this work. Since writing the earlier chapters of this book I have had two most striking cases of what I shall call "human psychometry"; I mean the elucidation of striking events connected with the history of human beings through the ouija-board.

One of the cases I am going to speak of afforded a more remarkable proof of the presence of a discarnate spirit than anything else that has come under my notice; I may, indeed, call it conclusive. At one of our usual sittings last spring two persons quite unknown to me were present. I had no idea that they had any special object in coming to our circle beyond a general interest in automatism. I sat with Mr. B., who knew nothing of the visitors.

It soon became clear that they desired a special message from a near relative who had passed over a long time before. The name of this relative was spelt out quite correctly, and a message which meant nothing to me, but seemed quite evidential to those concerned. The sitting was a long one; it continued for about two hours, and the results seemed very amazing to my visitors. Of course, I was quite unable to judge of them, as the circumstances were unknown to me.

A few nights later, when our usual circle only was present, we had another sitting, and the same communicator spoke to us. Mr. X., who had not been at the previous sitting, came in by chance and sat away from the board, not even listening to the message which was being spelt out. He fell into a state of semi-trance and complained that something terribly depressing was in the room. We broke off the sitting accordingly.

We had a third sitting a few nights later,

and the same thing occurred; the same communicator spoke to us, and Mr. X. came in and sat at a distance from the board. Almost immediately he fell again into trance conditions and appeared greatly distressed, complaining of some very depressing influence, and we broke off the sitting as before. Later in the evening the Rev. S. H. hypnotized Mr. X., put a pencil in his hand, and asked him to do some automatic writing. He wrote very violently the same message again and again: "Send this terrible thing away; it's coming again." We thought it best to put an end to the sitting. Next day my sister, who knew nothing about these sittings beyond the visitors' names, told me a most tragic tale connected with this communicator; he had committed suicide! I had heard nothing whatever of this story before. That evening I arranged to go to the theater. About the hour I should have started I got a violent headache, and was much upset for about two hours. I was con-

scious of abnormal depression, which took such complete possession of me I was unable to go out. I could not account for this attack in any way. I have never experienced such sensations before or since.

This was, I presume, a clear case of attempted obsession, first of Mr. X., then of me; it seemed quite clear that some external entity of a most dangerous kind was present at these sittings; it illustrated one of the greatest dangers connected with psychic work.

I cannot urge too much on my readers that the greatest caution should be used in the choice of sitters, and also that unpleasant communicators should be dismissed; the dangers of obsession are hardly realized by those who have not had some experience of them.

What I have said in this book must be taken as simply distilled from my own work; I should be glad to put forward some definite theory as to the origin of automatic communication, but I candidly admit that my experi-

ences have been so contradictory that no theory covers the whole field. I feel pretty well assured that we are dealing with external entities of some kind, and a few messages I have had, purporting to come from persons who had passed over, seemed impossible to explain except as direct or indirect communication from them. This, of course, is the point of vital interest for most people—this evidence of survival beyond the grave; it seems fairly clear that those who have joined the majority continue to exist in some form; nebulous or not, who knows? The earth-memory remains, for a time at least, but whether the spirit speaks to us directly, through a "control," or only when dreaming, no one can say; the extreme uncertainty of the messages received and the mixture of fact and fiction point to the latter idea.

Before I close I should like to refer to one more point which has interested me lately. Some people cherish the idea that much literary

and artistic work might be accomplished through the agency of controls, or shall we merely say through automatism? There is a good deal of evidence, I think, that stories and poems have been written, pictures painted, and even music composed, by psychic means. Of the actual artistic merits of these works I know nothing. In our circle, poor doggerel has come through Eyen, and tales, some of a very striking nature; through him and other controls, plots have been unfolded which might well afford material for fiction or drama. What is remarkable when these fabrics are woven at the ouija-board is the amazing rapidity with which the pattern of the plot develops; the traveler flies from letter to letter, seldom pausing for a word; the story reveals itself quite as quickly as if one were telling a well-known tale. It would be flattering to believe that this is a mere awakening of latent creative power in the sitters; I cannot credit that idea. These plots are certainly not in the

consciousness of the mediums. At these sittings one is reminded of deep-sea fishing; one cannot predict whether a flat fish, an eel, or a whiting will be drawn up by the line. Some of these tales are modern, some are ancient; most of them are melodramatic, some very original. I am convinced that they come through an external influence, though they may be tinged by the medium's literary taste. I do not anticipate that artistic work of the highest order will ever come through automatism, but I think the development of fiction by the control is most interesting and well worth attention, whether one admits the presence of an influence outside the medium or attributes this phenomenon to an abnormal quickening of the medium's creative power in a state of semi-hypnosis. I should greatly like to have the experience of many sitters in this line of research.

The question may fairly be asked, "Is the game worth the candle?" With such small re-

sults is it worth while to sit night after night and endure much dullness and fatigue for the sake of an occasional thrill? I find it hard to decide; I have been fairly satisfied that the dead survive, though the proofs I have had were not at all sensational. Surely that is an important point. I should be glad to give hope and comfort to those who have suffered during the past four years of war; whose happiness has been shattered by the loss of those near and dear to them. All I can tell them conscientiously is that I believe the spirits of those who have gone out into darkness live on, and for a time, at least, preserve their memory of earth.

So now that I have arrived at my final words, I feel I cannot have satisfied anyone; not the eager believer—for any faith I possess rests on very small foundations; not the keen student of psychic matters—for I cannot say that I think these studies should absorb anyone while the world provides work to

be done which brings in so much richer results; and not the determined skeptic—for my inclination is to smile at him as one would at an obstinate child; not to argue with him, but to leave him firm in his faith, for he is the really credulous person, the true believer in himself who never pauses to consider our limitations.

APPENDIX

HINTS TO EXPERIMENTERS AT THE OUIJA-TABLE

BE careful that the room in which the sitting is to take place is a quiet one; a noisy street or sounds in the house are very disturbing to a sitting, a ticking clock in the room even may annoy the control.

Be sure that the seats at the ouija-table are high enough to allow the sitters' hands to be on a level with it so that there is no strain on the arm and the hand can rest on the traveler in a completely relaxed state.

The light in the room should be sufficient for the person reading at the board to see clearly, but not so brilliant as to strain the eyes. It is

important that the temperature of the room should be agreeable. Any discomfort to the sitters keeps back results.

Not more than two people outside the sitters are desirable. Any crowd or feeling of strain or even whispered conversation is sure to interfere with the controls.

Everyone present should be calm and patient. Do not press for results. One disturbing presence in a room can ruin a sitting. Select those who habitually come to your sittings with great care.

Be sure that you have all that is necessary for the sitting conveniently at hand before you begin. A silk duster for polishing the glass, a bottle of methylated spirit and some French chalk are generally useful. It is essential that the glass should be well polished and the traveler properly shod so that jerking and creaking may be avoided.

Arrange that no one is admitted to the room during the sitting. The most interesting com-

munications may be broken off by a servant entering the room or even knocking at the door. The sitters should rest at the end of every half hour or so. No sitting should ever continue for more than two hours.

It is almost useless to sit in disturbed or stormy weather. Turmoil in the atmosphere seems to affect psychic communication.

Never sit when you are tired and ailing. This is a useless expenditure of force and the controls will at once recognize your physical condition. If a control (no matter how familiar you are with him) suggests seizure or obsession take your hand off the traveler at once and break off the communication.

Treat your controls and the communicators they bring with courtesy as you would any guest at your house. If they are undesirable you will probably soon discover it, if you observe carefully. A mocking or discourteous attitude very naturally retards the communication.

Never encourage communicators who profess to have led evil and criminal lives. The fact that they tell you these facts generally means that they will eventually attempt obsession.

It is best not to call up any special communicator. There are two obvious objections to doing so; it may bring the subsconsciousness of the sitter into play and assuming that impersonation is frequent it opens the door to fraudulent spirits.

Do not interrupt your communicators with frequent questions. Let them talk as much as they will and only say what is necessary. Otherwise if you reflect on what has passed you will find the communication comes chiefly from yourself.

Do not sit more than twice a week at most. It is far better to sit regularly in this way for a reasonable time than to have an occasional sitting of longer duration.

Take a record of every sitting whether in-

teresting or the reverse. It is only by heaped up evidence, good and bad, that you can attain to any conclusion as to the nature of your results.

If either sitter shows signs of trance conditions coming on or becomes excited or hysterical, break off the sitting at once. You cannot foretell the result if you continue.

The preceding hints may be useful to beginners for whose benefit I have jotted them down. I have perhaps hardly emphasized enough the importance of the careful selection of sitters and the fact that good work must be the result of patience and regularity. Strangers in the room nearly always check free and satisfactory communications. The control or discarnate spirit or sub-conscious mind seems more sensitive to atmosphere than the living human being.

Curiously enough I find sex is a factor in the choice of sitters. The best combination for ouija-work is a man and a woman. Two

women sometimes work excellently together, but I have never come across an instance of any results worth speaking of being achieved by two men.

Many inexperienced people think that because a discarnate spirit professes to speak to them this entity must of necessity possess miraculous powers. "Can it tell what horse will win the Derby?" or "Ask it when the War will end." These persons must learn that, so far as we can tell, discarnate spirits and controls are much in our own position unless specially gifted with prevision, and that when this quality is present it is almost invariably personal—connected with some sitter in whom the control or communicator is interested. Discarnate spirits seem to lose touch with this world rapidly; they have only an occasional flash of memory at most I believe.

My last word to those who purpose to experiment in automatic communication is, be patient, be prudent, never let an unbalanced or

hysterical person be present at your sittings; be satisfied with small results and look for nothing sensational, work regularly and do not let dull sittings discourage you. With caution and wisdom much may be achieved.

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